

**LIFESTYLE/CI**

Best, worst of RP art; notable books in '05

SPORTS/A17

Flashy Fil-Ams rule the roost in PBL cage wars

**NEWS/A2**

Luisita workers demand P321M as share in land converted to industrial park

ACROSS/A13

Boholanos prepare hero's burial for Fil-Am soldier killed in Iraq

Judge's slay shocks kith, kin; 80-year-old ma not yet told

BY Jhunex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—JUDGE HENRICK GINGOYON, a 1978 law graduate of the University of the Visayas, made a name for himself in the city as one of its leading human rights lawyers, defending political detainees in the 1980s.

JUDGE'S/A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, January 2, 2006

★★

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P18

website: www.inq7.net

Where loggers go, Brazilian worms follow

By Blanche S. Rivera

WANNA KNOW WHERE loggers have been? Earthworms can give you the answer.

A certain type of earthworm known as the

WHERE/A6



GI's case perils RP-US ties

DOJ: Arresting 4 accused of rape unfriendly act toward US

By Armand N. Nocum

AMID CALLS FOR THE ARREST of the four US Marines charged with raping a 22-year-old Filipino woman, the Department of Justice yesterday warned that Philippine-United States relations could be strained should the arrest result in a unilateral abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the Philippines must first negotiate with the United States to "return to us the custody of the accused" before the arrest warrants against the American soldiers could be served.

"We cannot arrest them and break the treaty unilaterally. That can become an unfriendly act with a country that is aligned with us," Gonzalez said.

This legal issue is bound to crop up when the court in Olongapo City raffles off the case tomorrow and the judge is called upon to issue warrants in accordance with the law, the justice secretary said.

"That is the issue that will ensue whether the warrants issued by the court can be enforced, considering the VFA provision," Gonzalez said.

Paragraph 6, Article 5, of the VFA states: "The custody of any United States personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with the United States military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings."

Gonzalez said the Philippines could not just disregard the provisions of the VFA because a "treaty is a part of our laws of the land."

He said the VFA was ratified by the Philippine Senate. But Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Gis CASE/A4



MIDNIGHT, JAN. 1, 2006: Brilliant patterns of light explode in the night sky over Manila as Filipinos from all walks of life sent up their own fiery celebrations to welcome the New Year.

Saying goodbye to the 'Hello Garcí' year

By Christian V. Esguerra and Luige A. del Puerto

ALTHOUGH UNCERTAIN OF WHAT lies ahead, Filipinos cheered the arrival of the new year with bursts of fireworks and occasional gunfire as they finally bade good riddance to the year of the "Hello Garcí" tapes.

If the Department of Health's statistics were any gauge, the revelry that

marked the coming of 2006 was a bit rowdier than the previous New Year's celebration, as 448 people—mostly with firecracker injuries—landed in hospitals around the country from Saturday night to early Sunday morning.

The total number of casualties during the merrymaking last year was 407.

But while there were at least two people killed last year, no deaths were recorded in last weekend's mayhem.

The Philippine National Police said there was a nearly 50-percent drop in cases of firecracker- and gunfire-related injuries in Metro Manila during its monitoring period from Dec. 16.

"Success would be zero casualty. That's the ideal number," declared Director Vidal Querol, head of the National Capital Region Police Office.

There were also fewer fires and no fire-related deaths as of press time.

SAYING/A9

ConCom's Cha-cha new battleground in '06

By Amando Doronila

THE COMPASS OF THE NATIONAL AGENDA for 2006 points to constitutional change as the battleground that will decide whether President Macapagal-Arroyo will complete her elected term in 2010 or whether we will have a sweeping, top-to-bottom change of

ANALYSIS

elected officials by next year. In politics, a journalist's outlook is shaped by his daily encounter with reality, which makes him resistant to the optimistic views of governments. In the context of this tradition of skepticism, I choose to take the role of Cassandra, the harbinger of bad news, who prophesied the sacking of Troy

in the midst of the 10-year siege of the city by the Greeks.

As a skeptic, I apply the test of skepticism with equal rigor to government, its enemies and political players from civil society and the Church who have taken on the role of political activists believing they can make and unmake elected governments. The same goes for civil society ac-

tivists who have appointed themselves arbiters of political morality with the fanaticism of the Ku Klux Klan and the lynch-mob certainty of vigilantes.

It is from this position where I view the outlook for 2006, from which all the bunkum and humbug of self-appointed CONCOM'S/A4

Ninoy murder convict knifed dead in New Bilibid Prisons

By Tarra V. Quismundo

ALL DRESSED UP FOR THE SPECIAL evening Mass, retired police sergeant Cordova Estelo was psyched up for the countdown to the new year at the maximum security compound inside the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa.

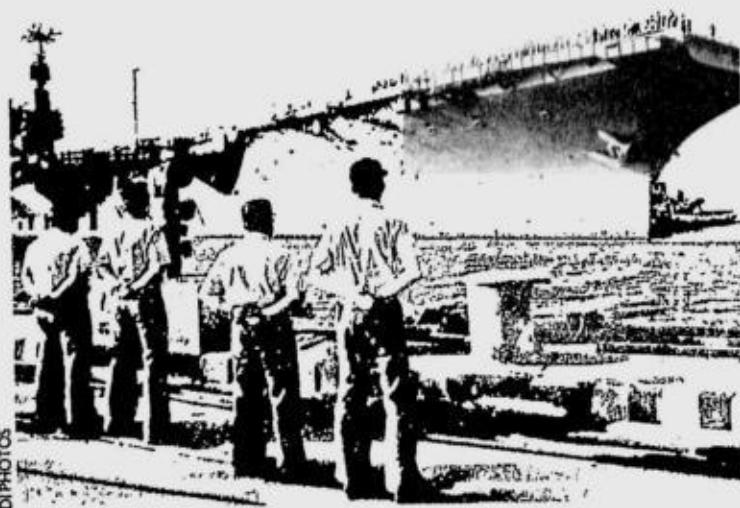
For the past 14 years, Estelo's Christmas holidays had been spent at the crowded prison ever since he and 15 other soldiers were meted out double life sentences in 1990 for the 1983 assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. and Aquino's alleged assassin, Roaldo Galman.

But barely four hours before midnight on Saturday, Estelo would be dead.

He died while trying to pacify Manuel Ocenar, a fellow inmate at Building 11 of the maximum security compound, who was on a drunken frenzy, brandishing a knife and a pistol.

Estelo died from a stab wound in his right side near his chest at about 8:45 p.m. on New Year's Eve, according to the death certificate issued by the NBP Hospital.

NINOV/A4



A US AIRCRAFT carrier leaves Subic Naval Base on March 18, 1992, after the Senate rejected the proposed bases agreement.



SEPT. 16, 1991. Two of the Senate's "Magnificent 12" who voted against the agreement with the US: Senators Guingona and Macea.

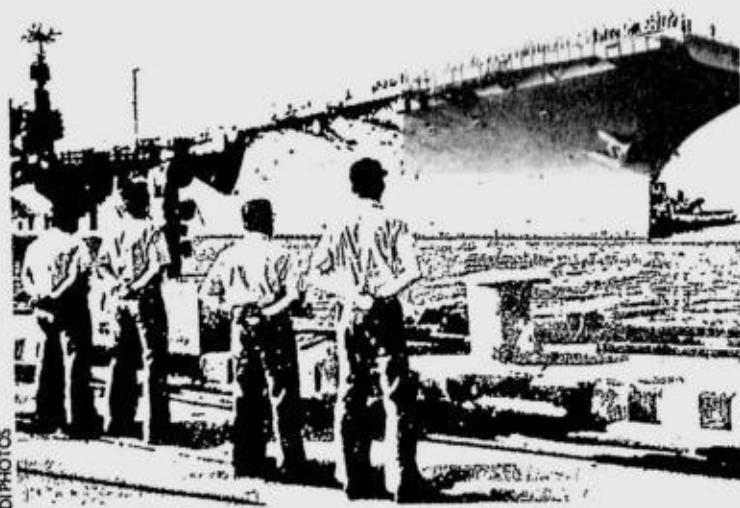
By Tony S. Bergonia

JOVITO SALONGA, THE SENATE President, was the most sought-after person in the old Senate building during those days in 1991 when the chamber pondered a treaty that would permanently alter the relationship between the Philippines and the former colonial power, the United States.

Salonga's office, a sparsely furnished room with books lying about everywhere, held the secrets that journalists wanted so badly to unlock during the deliberations for the ratification of the RP-US treaty that was to extend the life of the US military bases in the Philippines.

The secrets—mostly copies of SENATE/A6

Senate kept secret votes rejecting US bases



A US AIRCRAFT carrier leaves Subic Naval Base on March 18, 1992, after the Senate rejected the proposed bases agreement.



SEPT. 16, 1991. Two of the Senate's "Magnificent 12" who voted against the agreement with the US: Senators Guingona and Macea.

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The secrets—mostly copies of SENATE/A6

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/01/02/06

Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: Inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 2006

Luisita workers demand P321M of profits

By Blanche S. Rivera

AFTER WINNING A GOVERNMENT RULING to parcel out to them the nearly 5,000-hectare sugar estate of former President Corazon C. Aquino's family, the workers of Hacienda Luisita are now pressing to collect up to P321 million in "unpaid profits" they say is due them as shareholders, or co-owners with the Cojuangco's, of the company that owns and manages the farm.

The farm workers, represented by the Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Hacienda Luisita (Ambala), are set to file with the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) a motion asking it to resolve the issue of the conversion of land be-

longing to Hacienda Luisita into an industrial park.

Jobert Pahilga, legal counsel of Ambala, said the PARC had resolved only the farm workers' demand for the revocation of the stock distribution option (SDO) that has been in effect in

the hacienda for the past 16 years.

"What the PARC resolved was the revocation of the SDO, but that's just one of three issues we raised in our complaint," Pahilga told the Inquirer in a phone interview yesterday.

3 main issues

The SDO revocation, the stop to further land conversion and the release of 33 percent of profits from the conversion of 577 hectares of Hacienda Luisita land were the three main issues raised in the farm workers' complaint filed with the PARC in October 2003.

The PARC decided with finality on Dec. 20 to revoke the Hacienda Luisita stock scheme and to divide and distribute the 4,915-ha estate to the hacienda's thou-

sands of workers.

Co-owners of land

The SDO was a mechanism provided for under Republic Act No. 6657, or the Land Reform Law which Mrs. Aquino herself signed into law, as an alternative to actual land distribution to tenants. Under the SDO, tenants were made co-owners of the land through the issuance of shares of stock in companies that owned and managed the land subject to land reform as in the case of Hacienda Luisita, or HLI.

Share of proceeds

Pahilga said the farmers would ask the PARC to compel the HLI to pay the workers around P296 million as their share of the proceeds from the

conversion and development of 500 ha in 1996, and P25 million for the use by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority of another 77 ha for the Subic-Clark Expressway.

33 percent equity

The Luisita workers had received only three percent or P37 million from some P1 billion in earnings from the conversion of the 500 hectares into an industrial park, Pahilga said. The farmers should have received an amount representing their 33 percent equity as stockholders of the HLI, or about P333 million.

The three percent the farmers received represented their "production share," but Pahilga said this referred to farm output and not profits from the dis-

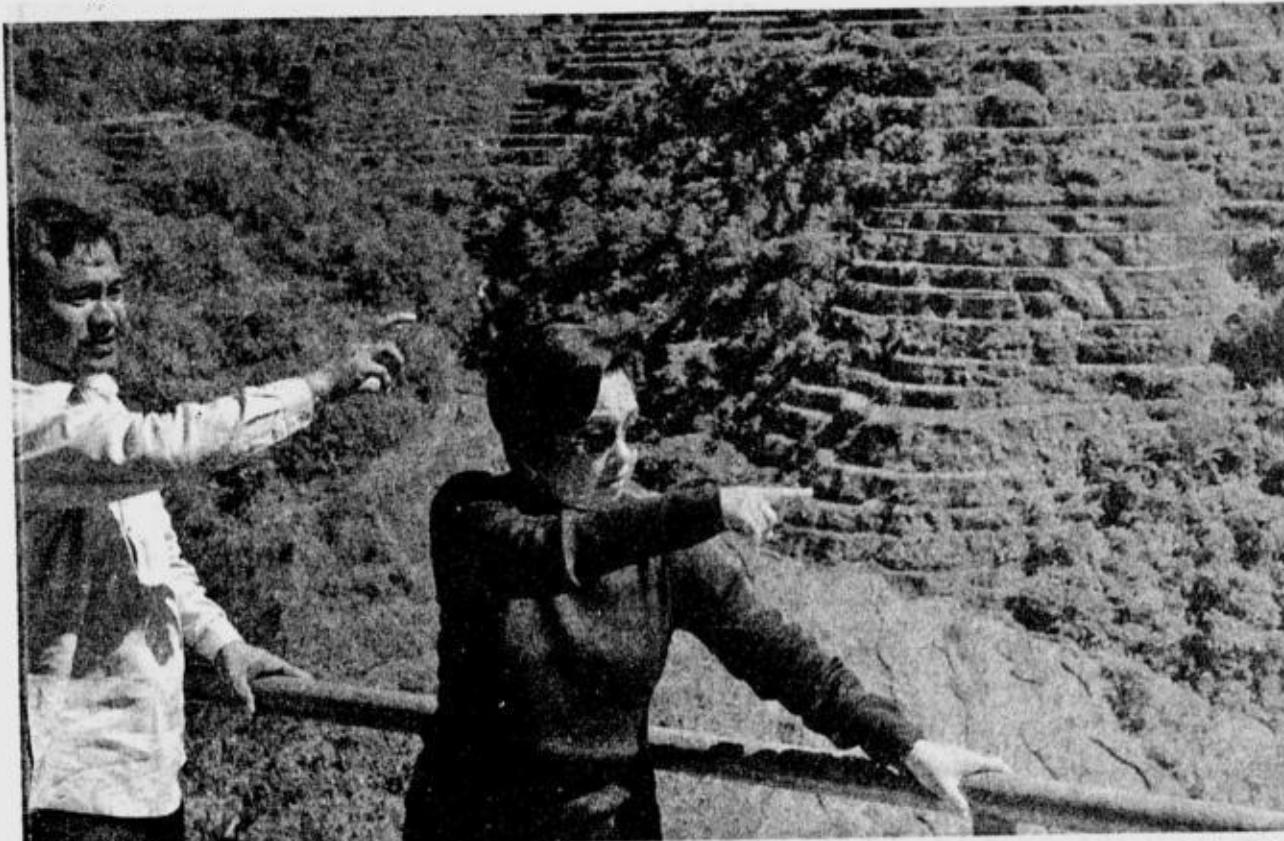
position of real property.

The Department of Agrarian Reform has said the government could distribute only around 4,300 ha of Hacienda Luisita because of the land conversions.

Go after HLI

"It's true that the land can no longer be distributed because it has been converted. But since it would no longer be distributed, then we would go after the HLI for what should have been given the farmers from the conversion of the land," Pahilga said.

Pahilga said the HLI could source the P321 million from the liquidation of the company's assets when the company is dissolved due to the SDO revocation.



PRESERVE THEM. This is what President Macapagal-Arroyo tells Mayor Jerry Dalipog of Banaue, Ifugao, during a visit to the famed Banaue rice terraces over the New Year weekend. The President, who has been pushing hard for domestic tourism, instructed Dalipog to oversee rehabilitation of some of the terraces that have crumbled. PCPHOTO

Quiet New Year for First Family

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—IN CONTRAST TO THE NOISY and rowdy gatherings in most parts of the country on New Year's eve, the First Family had a quiet celebration at The Mansion, the official presidential residence here where they are staying.

The only sound at The Mansion came from the drums of TSgt. Ruben Lorenzana, band leader of the Presidential Security Group Combo, who spent the evening playing for the First Family.

Earlier, the PSG band packed up at 5 p.m. from in front of The Mansion gates where they played pop and band music to entertain Baguio residents and tourists.

PSG civilian employee Michelle Narvaez and Sergeants Jeff Morales and Dolly Cruz fronted for the band.

On Saturday, tourists started to arrive at The Mansion's gates to catch a glimpse of President Macapagal-Arroyo and to listen to the 14-member PSG Combo.

"We were told that the [members of the First Family] always came out to greet the crowd, so we went here. I've never seen the President before. [On Friday], we even saw [First Gentleman Jose Miguel] Arroyo when

he came out to buy taho," said a Metro Manila resident who only identified herself as Victoria. She said the band was a good idea.

"Medyo gaganda ulit ang image niya pag ganyang lagi siyang may ibinibigay sa aming turista (Her image will improve if she continues to give something like this to tourists like us)," Victoria said.

Between midnight and Sunday noon, no firecracker-related accidents or crimes were reported at Barangay Lualhati, where The Mansion is located, according to PO3 Luis Liban of police precinct 3.

Only eight cases of firecracker-related injuries were recorded in the city, after Ms Arroyo ordered an aggressive anti-firecracker campaign.

The number of injuries reported was a cheerful welcome to 2006 for Baguio, which has seen the tourists return after cases of the bacterial disease meningococemia caused panic in the summer capital last year, said Purificacion Molintas, Cordillera director of the Department of Tourism.

Almost all hotels and inns recorded a 98 percent increase in holiday bookings this holiday season, Molintas said.

People should decide on 'no-el,' says De Castro

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO SAID yesterday the people should have the final say on whether or not to cancel the 2007 national elections to pave the way for the proposed shift from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government.

De Castro said he would not be an obstacle to a transition government, even if he were to be stripped of his position, as his political future was subordinate to the interests of the people.

The Vice President was reacting to the "deadline" given by former President Fidel Ramos to President Macapagal-Arroyo to make a public statement on whether she was for or against scrapping the 2007 elections as proposed by the Consultative Commission (ConCom). The deadline lapsed yesterday.

Ramos had hinted that he would abandon Ms Arroyo should she support the proposal to cancel the elections and extend the terms of elected government officials to 2010. He said his support for the President was conditioned on her willingness to cut short her term and working for a shift to a parliamentary system.

De Castro refused to comment on the ultimatum.

"President Arroyo and former President Ramos are both experienced politicians. They know where they are going and what's good for the country," he said.

He said the no-election proposal had yet to be submitted to Congress and eventually to the people.

"All we ask for is that our people be provided adequate information on this issue so they can make the right decision," he said, speaking in Filipino.

De Castro said he would not mind if he would not be given a significant position in the parliamentary government as long as the new set-up would result in better governance.

"It means nothing to me if they remove me or not," he said. "That involves only my own personal interest; the interest of the majority is more important. If that's what the people want, that's okay by me because it's the people who placed me in office," he said.

Meanwhile, De Castro said he supported efforts by the government-owned National Power Corp. to collect the P42 billion it said the Manila Electric Co. owed it.

De Castro made the statement to deny an accusation by the consumer group Samahan Laban sa Pang-a-Agrabayo ng Meralco (SLAM) that he was using his office to derail a planned government takeover of Meralco.

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US, Asia seen to power world economy in '06

PARIS—THE WORLD ECONOMY heads into the new year powered by vigorous growth in the United States and Asia after showing its mettle in a battle with high oil prices in the course of the past 12 months.

"The period of strong global growth looks set to continue," predicted economists at Credit Suisse First Boston.

"The coming year looks like being the third in a row in which it runs above the sort of rate that we would have previously thought of as a trend. On that basis, it could be the strongest three-year period for 30 years," they said.

But for Global Insight chief economist Nariman Behravesh, "the big question out there in 2006 is about the nexus between the United States and Asia that has kept the global economy going."

"Will this nexus remain firm or will it be broken because of economic and political issues?"

Tough US demands

A toughening in US demands for Chinese currency reform, an increase in protectionist sentiment or, more seriously, a standoff over Taiwan, could all undermine relations between the two countries, he said.

Currency reform in China—Washington maintains the yuan is undervalued—is linked to another major risk for the world economy in 2006, namely, the ever-widening US current account and trade deficits.

These deficits were expected to cause a significant fall in the dollar in 2005—which never materialized—but they continue to constitute the biggest imbalance threatening economic stability, economists say.

Other clouds on the horizon include a possible slowdown in the

galloping US housing market and an increase in the consumer saving rate, which remains below historic levels in many countries.

Inflation, along with oil, was the dominant theme for much of the second half of 2005, and it is likely to continue to figure prominently in 2006 as central banks remain on their guard.

The global economy's resistance to inflation in 2005 proved a revelation for many economists, revealing fundamental structural changes witnessed in the last two decades as well as benign shifts in attitudes.

Economic slowdown

As oil surged from around \$43 per barrel at the start of the year to more than \$70 in August, many had forecast an economic slowdown because consumers were expected to feel the pinch from higher prices.

Judging by past experience, inevitable inflationary effects would require a tightening of interest rates, acting as a further brake on economic growth.

In fact, world economic growth is forecast to be about 3.2 percent in 2005 and inflation, which spiked in September, has retreated in recent months in line with an easing of oil prices towards \$60 per barrel.

"The most pleasant surprise and remarkable development in 2005 has been the resilience of the US and Asian economies to record high oil prices," said Behravesh.

"In the past, if we'd have had this type of rise in oil prices, we'd have had weaker growth and higher inflation."

Looking ahead, according to Bank of America economist Lorenzo Codogno, "the optimistic global outlook is based on improving fundamentals."

AFP

Indons to invest P3B in RP

INDONESIA'S LIPPO GROUP, along with local partners, is investing some P3 billion (\$56.5 million) in a Philippine bank, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced Saturday.

"The Lippo Group (is) investing P3 billion in Export Industry Bank," Ms Arroyo told reporters in Baguio City where she and her family were spending the holidays.

AFP

She said the agreement involving the Lippo Group "and a consortium of new local investors ... bodes well for the further strengthening of the financial sector."

She would not elaborate on the deal, however.

The Lippo Group is based in Jakarta, Indonesia, but has interests in Hong Kong and China.

AFP

Work with vets to get benefits, gov't execs urged

GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER.

A former congressman who is currently a director of the Philippine Veterans Bank has urged the government and World War II veterans' groups to work together to obtain full benefits for aging Filipino veterans in the US Congress.

Former Camarines Sur and Veterans party-list Rep. Eduardo Pilapil, speaking before the war veterans' descendants at the launching of the WWII Heritage Organization Inc. on Mt. Samat in Bataan last month, pointed out stark differences in the Philippine government and the Filipino veterans' positions on the US-based campaign to regain eligibility.

He said that while the top policy-making body of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines had come out only for full equity bills HR302 and S146 in the US Congress, some Philippine government officials were working for partial equity bills which would not give Filipino veterans the US benefits their American counterparts received.

He identified the government officials as belonging to the Department of National Defense, Philippine Veterans Affairs Office and the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C.

He described the partial equity bills as "a prolongation of the injustice done to our World War II veterans and a perpetuation of the indignity heaped upon the Filipino people by the Rescission Act."

It will be recalled that in 1946, the US Congress passed the Rescission Act, a law that denied to and removed from most Filipino war veterans their eligibility to receive US veterans benefits, despite the fact that the Filipinos had fought under the US flag as American nationals from 1939 to 1945.

Since 1945, Pilapil, who was also tourism secretary and postmaster general, said the Philippine government had sought to remedy the injustice done to the Filipino veterans.

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Hitman trailed judge

By Luige A. del Puerto, Marlon Ramos and Nikko Dizon

A MAN IN A BLACK SHIRT AND jeans was snooping around the gym where Judge Henrick Gingoyon was working out before the judge was shot dead Saturday, the police said yesterday, quoting witnesses.

The man had overheard the gym's owner greet Gingoyon "Happy New Year" and therefore had the chance to confirm the identity of the judge who had authorized the government takeover of the mothballed Terminal 3 of Manila's international airport upon payment of P3 billion to Piatco, the consortium that built the terminal.

The man left the building before the judge did, according to the police.

Gingoyon, 53, of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 117,

had just left the gym at Soldier's Hills Village in Barangay Molino, Bacoor, Cavite, and was walking home when one of two men on a motorcycle shot him in the back.

He was declared dead on arrival at a hospital in Imus town.

Senior Supt. Benhardi Mantele, chief of the Cavite Police, said the man the police were looking for was about 28 to 30 years old, between 5'8" to 5'9" tall, and of medium build.

Investigators were working on this information in an effort to identify the man who shot dead the controversial judge.

"We're not saying this man is already the suspect. But he was making inquiries about the gym, such as (how to become) a member," Mantele said. "This is at least (a) lead."

Director General Arturo Lomibao has directed the Southern Luzon Police to create a task force to investigate the murder.

Judge's slay shocks . . .

From page A1

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Jerome said he was still bewildered by his brother's brutal death. "We are still in a state of grief, so the family cannot issue any statement," he said when reached Saturday.

The INQUIRER sent a text message yesterday to Jerome asking for a statement from the family but it was his son, Jerade, who responded by saying that they could not issue any statement as his uncle's siblings were still meeting at the family home on Urgello Street.

The siblings have to inform their 80-year-old mother, Conchita, about Henrick's death.

Jerade said the Gingoyon siblings were also discussing when to bring Henrick's body home to Cebu.

Elaine and Jerade said their uncle was a very kind and good person who, despite his stature, had never changed and had maintained a simple lifestyle.

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'Pinoy charm is top tourist attraction'

By Jerome Aning

IT NOT THE PLACE BUT THE PEOPLE.

The warmth and hospitality of the Filipinos rather than the country's physical attractions were the main draw for foreign tourists who came to the Philippines, according to Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano.

"A big chunk of the country's annual inbound tourists were repeat visitors and they returned to the Philippines to savor again their overall positive experience. Number one in their list was their memorable encounter with the people," Durano said in an interview.

While official tourism figures were still being accumulated, the secretary predicted that for 2005, foreign tourist arrivals would have exceeded 2004's record of 2.5 million visitors.

Foreigners in 2005 were projected to have spent about \$2.5 billion at local hotels, restaurants, malls, other tourist facilities and for transportation, Durano said.

Tourism also generated more than 300,000 new jobs in 2005, on top of the 2 million workers already in the industry, he said.

Durano said that as the economy benefits from tourism in the form of profits and jobs, more Filipinos would become conscious of the importance of the "culture of tourism."

The term was coined by former tourism secretary now Sen. Richard Gordon, who had said that acts ranging from refraining from littering on the streets to ensuring that tourists were safe and comfortable translated to a better image of the Philippines abroad.

Durano said that this year, the Department of Tourism would be unveiling new marketing plans and beefing up promotional campaigns to make its operations even more sweeping and effective.

Aside from improving its marketing drive in China, the DOT is also targeting India, Russia and Australia for its "market specific" approach in promoting Philippine tourism, he said.

Rising tourist arrivals should also mean a need for more accommodations for them, Durano said, as he called for an increase in the country's hotel capacity.

The secretary said total room capacity was only around 3 million.

In 2005, the government was able to raise about \$2 billion in investments, mostly from abroad, to construct and expand tourist accommodations and facilities in the country.

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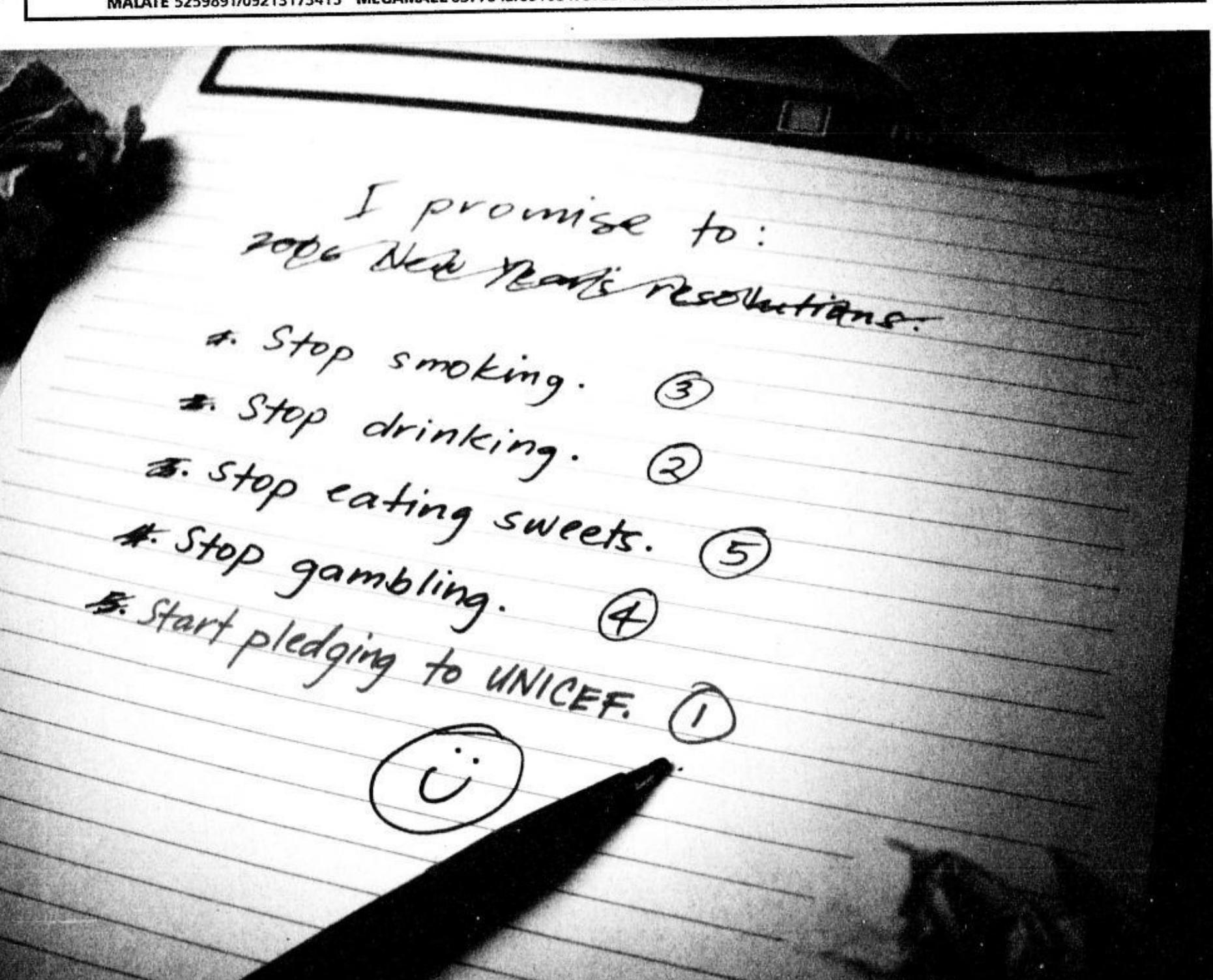
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Pangako para
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Senate kept secret votes rejecting US bases

From page A1

letters from President Corazon Aquino, copies of the draft treaty, communications between foreign affairs officials and the US Embassy—were being kept under tight guard in Salonga's office.

But their contents dribbled slowly out of other senators' mouths, which were much easier to pry open than Salonga's cabinets.

The trick was to approach the senators without paper, pen or tape recorder in hand. This was to avoid either of two things happening—the senators putting on their best behavior and talking guardedly or clamping up altogether to avoid spilling the beans on a treaty described as one-sided in the United States' favor that it might have been crafted by people who wanted the Senate to trash the document.

To do this, a reporter needed sharp ears, a long memory and sound judgment on whether a senator's statement was fact, propaganda or gibberish.

Another rich lode of information were members of the senators' staffs who were lured into conversations inside elevators, the not-so-exclusive senators' lounge and after-office watering holes.

The deliberations on the treaty were attended with so much legal jargon that covering them became quite boring, at least for some of the journalists.

Even before the treaty was officially transmitted to the Senate for ratification, reporters already knew which senators were likely to vote to reject or ratify it, although quite a few surprises were sprung at the end.

Firm editorial stand

"Emotions were running very high at the time," says Arnold Clavio, who was then covering the Senate for dZBB radio.

The treaty drew out strong reactions, not only from the senators who were deciding its fate, but also from the reporters who were chronicling how the Senate would make its historic decision.

Emotions were so high that

Sen. Leticia Ramos Shahani, who chaired the committee on foreign relations that was vetting the treaty before it could be brought to the floor for debate, complained of what she perceived to be the INQUIRER's anti-bases bias.

(The INQUIRER had by then made a rare editorial stand—the US military bases must go. The issue became so contentious even within the INQUIRER that the newspaper's president at the time, Enrique Belo, a gentleman of the old school, resigned because he could not reconcile his pro-bases position with the paper's anti-bases stance.)

At the press working area of the old Senate building that is now a museum, reporters were monitoring the live television coverage of the debates.

The same way that it divided the Senate, the bases treaty issue had driven a wedge among reporters who were on opposite sides of the issue.

As the late Sen. Neptali Gonzales was fiercely defending the treaty on the Senate floor as one so valuable that its defeat could lead to economic doom for the country, one reporter got so carried away that he began shouting invectives. Another reporter shouted back at him in defense of Gonzales.

Erap's favorite

But though tensions were running high, there was also plenty of comic relief. Butch Fernandez, who was then covering the Senate for the defunct Daily Globe, recalls how the then Sen. Joseph Estrada would step into the well-lighted session hall in dark glasses to conceal his favorite occupation—sleeping.

At one point, Estrada, a former movie star whose anti-bases position did much to popularize the cause, approached a TV cameraman and asked him not to focus his camera on him.

"Then he would return to his seat, put his sunglasses back on and sleep," Fernandez recalls.

Clavio, who now hosts the popular morning show "Unang Hirit" on GMA 7, recalls how he could

not forget the floor debate between Senators Ernesto Herrera and Agapito "Butz" Aquino.

Herrera was making a pitch for the retention of the bases, citing a US promise of assistance in labor training if the Senate ratified the treaty.

Ethnic 'insult'

Herrera, a Boholano who speaks with a thick Visayan accent, was saying that he was convinced of the benefits the country would derive from the treaty, including the promised dollars that would go "letter" into labor training.

He of course meant "later."

The anti-bases Butz Aquino, who just could not let pass an opportunity for an ethnic insult, stood up and asked Herrera if he meant "letter" or later."

The exchange did not make it to the papers, but it went into the record as one of the lowest points of the Senate treaty deliberations.

The debates were replete with images that would be etched forever in the minds of those who covered the whole issue.

Cory rebuffed

To Clavio, one of the most memorable sights was that of President Corazon Aquino in a yellow raincoat marching in the rain from Malacañang to the Senate to lobby for the treaty's ratification. She would be rebuffed by Butz Aquino, the brother of her husband, the martyred hero Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

While his eloquence and flair for public speaking paled in comparison with that of his illustrious brother, Butz would utter what to Clavio was one of the most stirring words on the treaty and perhaps the only quotable statement in his entire public life: "I love my country more than I love my President."

The courageous woman who led the movement to oust the dictator Ferdinand Marcos stood in the Senate, drenched from the rain, asking to let the American military presence remain in the Philippines, and was rejected. Photographers fired away.

One of the most moving images was that of the revered nationalist

and ex-senator, the late Jose W. Diokno, who sat in his wheelchair in the gallery watching as senators cast and explained their votes.

When it became clear that the treaty would be defeated, Diokno, already weak from cancer, tried to rise from his wheelchair as he raised a clenched fist, a gesture he had made countless times in the past in many anti-Marcos rallies.

He would die a few days after the treaty was rejected.

The debates also offered many opportunities for grandstanding and gimmickry as some anti-bases senators wanted their act to be recorded in history in types larger than they deserved.

Timing, entertainment

A proven master of timing, Sen. Ernesto Maceda was remembered by journalists not so much for what he said but for the drama he tried to pull off. He ended his speech at exactly 3 p.m. with the words: "Consumatum est (It is done)." The pompous reference to Christ's dying words was intentional, and some journalists refused to pick it up.

The entertainment was mainly provided by Estrada who, in the beginning, was quite content to watch from the sidelines as reporters interviewed his more knowledgeable colleagues. But the ex-movie star could not stand being ignored for long. One day he approached the group of reporters and asked: "Ako, hindi niyo ba i-interbyuhin (Aren't you going to interview me, too)?"

The former actor not only provided a light and amusing side to the treaty deliberations, he literally brought the bases debate to the level of entertainment.

While the whole issue was roiling the country, Estrada produced an anti-bases film "Sa Kuko ng Agila" in which he also starred. He succeeded in getting his Senate colleague, Sen. Nikki Coseteng, to be his leading lady. Arguably, the most memorable thing about the movie was the scene that showed Estrada kissing a very stiff Coseteng.

Reporters tried every trick in the book to squeeze information from

the senators, especially when they were holding meetings behind closed doors. They tried smuggling tape recorders through the waiters, held their ears to the walls and tried to loosen the tongues of Senate staffers with bottles of beer.

But the most important information that landed in the front pages of the INQUIRER would come straight from the horses' mouths. Some senators just could not resist the temptation of being quoted in the papers.

Nature helped

In the end, even nature helped the opponents of the US bases. At

the height of the bases debate, Mt. Pinatubo erupted and blanketed Clark Air Base with thick ash fall that made the facilities all but useless to the US Air Force. The Americans abandoned Clark and retreated to Subic, as if to make their last stand there.

When the day came for the senators to vote, Sen. Wigberto Tafida called on anti-bases advocates to wear green. On the Senate floor, as rejection became clearer with each vote cast, reporters could be seen among those wearing green.

The partying began in the streets and it would be a long, long night.

Where loggers go . . .

From page A1

Brazilian earthworm is the tell-tale sign that an area has been logged, whether the loggers, the government or even the communities deny the activity, according to biologist Dante Flores.

"If we see a Brazilian worm, you know that an area has been logged . . . Anywhere you go, the Brazilian earthworm is there; it is perhaps the only species you can find from Babuyan (island) to Sulu," said Flores, an earthworm expert.

Brazilian worms, named so because of their origin, are pink with yellow humps.

Flores, who has spent the past three years studying earthworms in the Philippines, said the Brazilian earthworms, which usually thrive in the lowlands, are transferred to upland forests only by human activity.

The Brazilian earthworms usually come with the tree species used for replanting after a forest has been logged over. The trees are often taken from the lowlands, where the Brazilian earthworms are found.

"They can tolerate any kinds of habitat. They are transferred by human activity and are highly invasive," Flores said.

He cited the existence of Brazilian earthworms in a denuded for-

est in Hinubaan, Negros Occidental. The forest, which is 98 percent logged over, has a huge population of Brazilian earthworms.

Unlike other species, the Brazilian earthworms' excretion becomes compact, which blocks the entry of water into the soil instead of facilitating it and helping reduce floods.

"If you want to stop flash flooding, you really need [other] earthworms because they bore holes, which make it easier for the rain to go straight to the roots of the trees," Flores said.

An earthworm expedition conducted by Samuel James, an expert on earthworm taxonomy at the Kansas University Biodiversity Research Center, and Flores revealed that the Philippines could have the highest diversity of earthworms in the world.

The Philippines has a "ridiculously high endemism and diversity of earthworms," Flores quoted James as saying based on discoveries during their exploration last month.

There are at least 200 earthworm species in the forests of Luzon and on Mt. Malindanag and the municipality of Kitanglad in Mindanao. The Visayas could easily reveal another 200 "undescribed" species, Flores said.

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Keep send-off groups small, travelers told

By Nikko Dizon

YOU DON'T NEED THE WHOLE BARANGAY to see you off at the airport.

Girding for the exodus of *balikbayans* and overseas Filipino workers who spent the holidays in the country, the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) Thursday issued tips on how to avoid predeparture hassles.

While Filipinos are traditionally close-knit, a Miaa official said large sendoff parties comprised of family members and friends unnecessarily add to the congestion at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

"Having one or two relatives or friends bring you to the airport and see you off is actually enough," Supt. Rizalino Roxas, chief of operations at the Naia Airport Security Center, said in an interview.

Congestion also adds to the security nightmare at the Naia, where tight security measures are being implemented in light of the global terrorism threat.

Roxas said an estimated 11,000 passengers, mostly *balikbayans* and OFWs, were expected to leave the country via the Naia beginning Jan. 2.

To expedite predeparture procedures, Roxas advised passengers to place their personal belongings that have metal components, like belts and jewelry, in their hand-carry luggage.

"By doing that, passengers won't have to remove their belts or jewelry before going through the X-ray machine and then put them on again while in line, causing long queues at the security checks," Roxas said.

He said that by placing their valuables in their hand-carry bags, passengers also minimized the risk of losing their property when these are placed on a tray and run through the X-ray machine.

Among other tips Roxas gave departing passengers were:

- Confirm your return flight bookings.
- Be at the airport at least four hours before your flight's scheduled departure time. OFWs should first proceed to the Naia OFW Lounge for validation of their predeparture documents before checking in.
- Fill out the immigration embarkation form, which is usually given out together with the airline ticket, before proceeding to the immigration area; filling out the form at the immigration counter can cause delay.
- Have P550 or \$10 ready for the terminal fee.
- Stay within the airport premises after checking in.

Roxas reiterated that bullets used as amulets and key chains were prohibited in the airport and on aircraft.

Don't go to Kuwait on tourist visas, DFA warns OFWs

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS has issued a warning to Kuwait-bound Filipinos not to use tourist visas to try and find employment in that country.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs advises all overseas Filipino workers bound for Kuwait to possess the proper work permits and residence visas and not tourist visas in order to avoid problems with immigration authorities in that Middle East country," said the DFA in a statement, noting that Kuwait immigration was "very strict" about issuing employment documents.

The travel advisory was issued on the recommendation of Charge d' Affaires Ricardo Endaya of the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait.

Endaya said foreign workers with expired tourist visas, several Filipinos among them, were being required to pay a penalty of KD2 (Kuwaiti dinar) a day, which is equivalent to P370.

Some of the OFWs are now staying at the Philippine Embassy's welfare center.

OFWs going to Kuwait on tourist visas "are likely to be exploited by unscrupulous employers and may eventually find themselves stranded with their wages unpaid," Endaya said.

He said it was not easy to find good jobs in Kuwait unless a foreign worker had a visa-18.

"Majority of Filipino workers in Kuwait have only a visa-20, which is for domestic workers and is not transferable unless agreed upon by the employer," Endaya said.

He said those holding visa-20s cannot work in hotels, restaurants or offices. *Nikko Dizon*



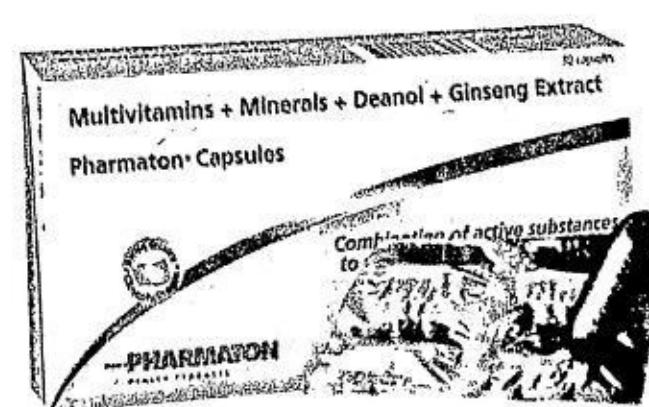
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Subway strike, car-burning mar New Year festivities

NEW YORK—HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF New Year's revelers rang in 2006 from Times Square as the famous crystal ball dropped on the final seconds of the weary and battered old year.

"Now bring on peace and happiness!" exclaimed Tarr Meaders, visiting from Arlington, Texas, as the crowd burst into cheers at the stroke of midnight.

Londoners ignored a subway strike to welcome the New Year. Some Japanese climbed a snow-capped peak to see the first sunrise of 2006. GIs in Iraq got a year-end "American Idol" treat.

New Year's celebrations like these spread throughout the world Saturday and early Sunday and were generally jubilant, a contrast with last year when the devastation of the Indian Ocean tsunami led many countries and individuals to cancel festivities.

In parts of Asia, the threat of terrorism loomed large, and a bombing at a market in Indonesia killed eight people and wounded 45.

As confetti rained down and the numbers 2006 lit up over Times Square, the massive crowd stretching more than 10 blocks up Broadway and the surrounding streets sang "Auld Lang Syne" as one voice.

In Boston, First Night celebration organizers estimated more than 1 million people were in the city to celebrate the new year.

The theme in Boston was Mardi Gras, in honor of hurricane-ravaged New Orleans. The "Spirit of New Orleans" parade featured carnival masks, and jazz bands joined in.

New Orleans itself started the New Year's celebration with a traditionally festive jazz funeral procession in memory of its hurricane victims. Despite the devastation, the city decided to welcome 2006 with concerts and a lowering of a giant gumbo pot to mark the start of the new year.

Revelers were urged not to light fireworks out of fear that they would ignite dead vegetation and debris still piled throughout the city or the blue plastic tarps draped over thousands of damaged roofs.

Flooding from storms in the West forced Reno, Nevada, to move its New Year's Eve fireworks back a day to Monday, but the mayor still promised to lead a New Year's Eve countdown.

Las Vegas, meanwhile, kept in character—everything to excess—with the Strip's drunken

revelry, a mass simultaneous New Year's Eve toast, complete with 14,000 plastic cups and some 200 cases of Chardonnay, and an annual blowout billed as the largest New Year's Eve party outside New York.

In France, youths burned hundreds of cars in a traditional year-end form of vandalism, but the country appeared to have avoided a massive resurgence of the rioting that broke out this fall.

By 4 a.m. Sunday, police counted 343 vehicles burned—just slightly more than the comparable figure from last year, 323, police said. They also arrested 266 people, but it wasn't clear if the arrests were linked to the vandalism.

Hundreds of American soldiers in Iraq got a special show from "American Idol" singer Diana DeGarmo and other entertainers at Camp Victory in Baghdad. AP

Churchill willing to let Gandhi starve to death, say archives

LONDON—WINSTON CHURCHILL, Britain's World War II prime minister, was prepared to let Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi starve to death if he went on hunger strike while interned during the war, archives released in London showed Sunday.

He thought Gandhi should be dealt with like any other detainee if he refused food.

Churchill's tough line was recorded during war Cabinet meetings, which also showed Britain's confusion over how to handle the charismatic Indian leader's stance of peaceful opposition.

The notes record Churchill as saying Gandhi should stay in detention and "let him do as he likes."

Deputy Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brook's notes reveal ministers wondered whether Gandhi as a martyr would lead to a mass uprising in India—and embarrassment for Britain.

However, they did not want to free Gandhi and allow him to campaign against the war and British rule while the crown colony was under the threat of Japanese invasion.

Gandhi was held for two years at the Aga Khan's Palace in Pune, western India, from August 1942 after slamming India's involvement in the war and calling for civil disobedience.

India's viceroy, Lord (Victor) Linlithgow, sent ministers a telegram stating he was "strongly in favor of letting (Gandhi) starve to death" if he went on hunger strike.

However, officials in London worried that the backlash would be too powerful.

Lord (Edward) Halifax, the ambassador to the United States and a former viceroy of India and foreign secretary, told Cabinet the day after Gandhi's Aug. 9 arrest in Bombay: "Whatever the disadvantages of letting him out, his death in detention would be worse."

Ministers decided in January 1943 that although they could not be seen to cave in to a hunger strike, they would free him on compassionate grounds were he likely to die.

Sir Stafford Cripps, minister for aircraft production—who the previous year had failed to reach an agreement with Gandhi that would secure Indian loyalty to the war effort—said: "He is such a semi-religious figure that his death in our hands would be a great blow and embarrassment to us."

However, Churchill, annoyed by the prospect of Gandhi claiming a moral victory, said: "I wd (would) keep him there and let him do as he likes," according to the notes.

"But if you are going to let him out because he strikes, then let him out now." AFP



HUNDREDS of thousands of revelers watch as the year 2006 is brought in with fireworks in New York's Times Square, Jan. 1.

N. Korean troops told to become 'human bullets' against US attacks

SEOUL—STALINIST NORTH KOREA, in a New Year message on Sunday, urged its soldiers to become "human bullets and bombs" against possible US attacks and vowed to boost farming to feed its people amid international fears of famine.

The nation also vowed to bolster unity with South Korea in an editorial message carried jointly by three newspapers representing the ruling communist party, military and youth guard.

"Whatever the situation is, the principled stand of our party and state to give top priority to the mil-

tary remains unchanged," read the message, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

It urged North Korea's 1.1 million troops to become "human bullets and bombs" defending the state led by Kim Jong-il, one of the world's most isolated countries, from possible US attacks.

The North also called on South Koreans to join its "struggle to resolutely foil the US attempt to launch another war" on the Korean peninsula.

"We must remove the root cause of war completely from this

land by launching a nationwide campaign for driving out the US troops," the message said.

North Korea has been locked in a standoff for years with the United States over its development of nuclear weapons. It has stepped up its anti-US rhetoric in recent weeks following US criticism of its human rights record.

The editorial, however, avoided touching on the stalled nuclear disarmament negotiations which involve the United States, both Koreas, China, Russia and Japan. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

Russia cuts off gas to Ukraine

MOSCOW—Russia began cutting off gas to Ukraine in a dispute that could hit deliveries to a wintery Europe on the very day that Moscow debuted as chairman of the Group of Eight industrialized nations. Russian Gazprom said it had begun reducing pressure in the pipeline supplying Ukraine on Sunday after Kiev refused to pay the increased amount Moscow was demanding for its gas and last-ditch efforts failed to resolve the price row. "In this situation, which is the fault of the Ukrainian side, we have been forced to start reducing pressure in the pipeline to Ukraine," Gazprom spokesman Sergei Kupriyanov told a news briefing. Gazprom supplies 25 percent of western Europe's gas—most of it via Ukraine. Moscow is seeking a rise in the price of gas it sells to Ukraine to \$230 per 1,000 cubic meters from the current \$50.

Sudanese hostages freed in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Five Sudanese hostages held by al-Qaida in Iraq were reported on Saturday to have been freed, as at least 14 people were killed in a series of attacks across the country. A day after Khartoum shut down its embassy in Baghdad in line with the kidnappers' demands, Al-Jazeera television said the Sudanese foreign ministry has announced the release of the five hostages, who included a diplomat. The Iraqi government in Baghdad was unable to confirm the report. Al-Qaida on Thursday claimed the kidnapping of five Sudanese in an Internet statement, giving Khartoum 48 hours to break off diplomatic relations with Baghdad, close its embassy and "withdraw all its representatives" in Iraq. Khartoum then closed down its embassy and withdrew its diplomats on Friday.

Sharon to undergo heart operation

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will undergo a heart operation on Thursday, the Haaretz newspaper reported Sunday. Doctors at Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital in Jerusalem will perform a so-called balloon angioplasty, a standard treatment for coronary artery disease, in which the blood flow to the heart is restricted. In the operation a tiny balloon will be inserted into an artery to push fatty plaque back against the artery wall to make more room for blood to flow. This improved blood flow reduces the risk of heart attack and sudden cardiac death. "The decision to operate on the prime minister will be made by his doctors. An official communiqué will be published," a senior official at the prime minister's office told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

British woman marries dolphin

JERUSALEM—SHARON TENDER met Cindy 15 years ago. She said it was love at first sight. This week she finally took the plunge and proposed. The lucky "guy" plunged right back.



In a modest ceremony at Dolphin Reef in the southern Israeli port of Eilat, Tandler, a 41-year-old British citizen, apparently became the world's first person to "marry" a dolphin.

Dressed in a white dress, a veil and pink flowers in her hair, Tandler got down on one knee on the dock and gave Cindy a kiss. And a piece of herring.

"It's not a perverted thing. I do love this dolphin. He's the love of my life," she said Saturday, upon her return to London.

Tandler, who said she imports clothes and promotes rock bands in England, has visited Israel several times a year since first meeting the dolphin.

When asked in the past if she

had a boyfriend, she would always reply, "No. I'm going to end up with Cindy." On Wednesday, she made it official, sort of. While she acknowledged the "wedding" had no legal bearing she did say it reflected her deep feelings toward the bottlenosed, 35-year-old object of her affection.

"It's not a bad thing. It just something that we did because I love him, but not in the way that you love a man. It's just a pure love that I have for this animal," she said. AP

Treason trial for Syria's ex-VP urged

DAMASCUS—SYRIA'S PARLIAMENT called Saturday for the country's former vice president to face treason charges after he publicly accused President Bashar al-Assad of threatening Rafiq Hariri just months before Lebanese premier's murder.

"We appeal to Justice Minister Mohammed Ghafri to bring Abdel Halim Khaddam before justice for high treason and to take the necessary measures," said speaker Mahmud al-Abrash.

The parliament passed the motion unanimously calling for a trial during a regular session in which several lawmakers accused Khaddam of "treason" and "corruption" for his remarks, which dealt a new blow to Assad's regime.

"I demand, in my own name and the name of the people, that Khaddam is judged because he has attacked the dignity of Syria and humiliated millions of Syrians," said MP Umeima Khudur.

Khaddam, long the architect of Syria's military and political domination of neighboring Lebanon, made his explosive claims in an interview with Dubai-based Al-Arabiya television.

"I will destroy anyone who tries to hinder our decisions," Khaddam quoted Assad as telling Hariri during a meeting in Damascus.

AFP

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Gunmen blow up UN workers' club in Gaza Strip

GAZA—MASKED GUNMEN STORMED INTO a club for United Nations workers in Gaza City on Sunday and blew up the drinking hall in a new sign of spiralling unrest ahead of a Palestinian election.

It was the first such attack in Gaza on a UN target and came against a backdrop of growing unease among foreigners. Just over one day earlier, a group freed three British hostages that had been seized to demand foreign pressure on Israel.

The bombing was another big blow for President Mahmoud Abbas, just hours after he vowed to impose order ahead of a Jan. 25 election and as militants announced the expiry of a de facto truce with Israel that they had followed at his behest.

Gunmen burst into the UN club, one of the few places that alcohol is served in conservative Muslim Gaza. It had been closed for the day. The attackers tied up the security guard and struck him with gun butts.

Then they set explosives in front of the bar, unrolled a detonator cable and blew up the charges, ripping up the roof and shattering the windows.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

The United Nations is generally viewed with sympathy in Gaza.

Its agency supporting Palestinian refugees and their descendants, more than half of Gaza's 1.4 million population, is the second biggest employer after the Palestinian Authority.

Reuters

Saying goodbye to the 'Hello Garci' year

From page A1

Overall, firecracker victims had an average age of 18 years. The oldest was 88 and the youngest, 10 months old.

Neldina Laride, 43, of Pagadian City, was injured on Saturday night even while she was not doing anything. She was asleep when a bullet tore through her roof and grazed her head.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III attributed the slight increase in the overall casualty toll to cheap firecrackers smuggled from China, and to an old Filipino-style pyrotechnic reintroduced to the market last month.

The device is called "boga," a makeshift cannon made of plastic pipe whose explosion is triggered by denatured alcohol.

About 20 percent of all firecracker-related cases involved eye injuries and "boga," which hit 16 people and was partly blamed for a significant increase in such injuries.

Fewer stray bullets

The Pagadian woman might not agree but officials said one bright spot in the latest celebration was the marked decrease in the number of people hit by stray bullets.

Based on monitoring since Dec. 21, the figures were down by 40 percent to 19, compared with 33 people hit in 2004.

Counting all types of injuries, including those caused by firecrackers, stray bullets and others, the DOH recorded a total of 610 cases during the 12-day period, representing a 4-percent increase from the previous 585 cases.

Combined DOH and Philippine National Police figures showed three people died in the run-up to 2006, including two people who swallowed the poisonous "dancing firecracker" known as "watusi," and 6-year-old Alistair Edev Sofia, who was killed by indiscriminate firing on Christmas Day in General Trias, Cavite.

Well worth it

"That's not bad. It's good enough," Duque said, referring to the DOH information campaign to curb violence during New Year celebrations.

Asked if the results were worth the P1.3 million spent on the information drive, he said: "Oh yes, it's certainly was worth it ... we might have to spend a little bit more (in the coming years) to ensure greater reach."

The latest figures were not far different from those in the last five years, when the injury totals hovered between 500 and 600 cases, he said.

As many as 1,000 casualties were recorded in 2000.

Poor bystanders

Another disturbing figure that showed up in the latest monitoring period was that nearly half (47 percent) of the 582 people injured by firecrackers were apparently bystanders. Half of the number were also children aged 15 years and under.

"The implication was that these people suffered from firecrackers thrown at them by irresponsible handlers," said Dr. Eric Tayag, head of the DOH National Epidemiology Center.

In the overall casualty toll, Metro Manila registered the biggest number of casualties at 351, followed by Region 4 at 124 cases.

Drastic proposal

With the public apparently learning slowly from mistakes of the previous years, Duque is considering drastic measures to curb firecracker-related injuries.

He suggested that the government use firetrucks and hose down stalls selling pyrotechnic devices. He didn't say if the proposal would include licensed vendors.

But Duque acknowledged his pro-

posal alone wouldn't solve the problem, saying the issue needed a "broader perspective."

"This is an industry," he said. "People's lives, their education are dependent on this. Even if there is a noble intention to completely eradicate this, you can't do this overnight. You must be able to prepare and ease them out of this industry and introduce them to small- and medium-scale enterprises."

Explosion at The Mansion

In Baguio City, the only explosion to rock The Mansion, the President's vacation home, during the New Year's Eve revelry came from the drums of TSgt. Ruben Lorenzana, band leader of the Presidential Security Group Combo. (See story on Page A2.)

They spent a good part of the night playing for the First Family.

Reports from police and hospital authorities showed a sober celebration, with fewer cases of firecracker victims in the Bicol region and Lucena City.

With reports from

Vincent Cabreza, PDI

Northern Luzon Bureau; Delfin Mallari Jr., Gil Francis Arevalo and Mariano T. Virola Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Michael Sarcauga and Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Ghosts of the year past

EDITORIAL IN HER NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE, THE PRESIDENT used the strengthening of the peso as an omen of good fortune, and then called on the people to "break from the past and face a brave new future." It was yet another variation on a theme she first sounded during the 2004 elections, and then repeated, with renewed emphasis, during her last State of the Nation Address: The Philippines is two countries, one poised for economic takeoff, the other mired in the politics of the past.

It is the responsibility of leadership to set the agenda, and we do not quarrel with the President for trying to "set that of a "divided" nation. (Not our word, but hers, as a careful reading of her message will show.)

But we must say a few words about the future she says is brave and new, the past she wants the country to break from, and, yes, even the responsibilities of presidential speechwriters who write messages about the past and the future.

Let's begin with the speechwriting. Isn't there anyone in the President's inner circle who could have pointed out the insidious connotations when "brave" and "new" are joined together? The satirical Aldous Huxley novel, "Brave New World," did not only give us that combustible combination; it also gave us a vivid portrait of a harrowing future.

Unless President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted to telegraph a plan to reengineer the country's future to turn it into an impossible paradise, her speechwriters did her a disservice. What probably happened is something another prophetic writer of dystopian fiction, George Orwell, could have predicted: the political writers use of "prefabricated" language—without thinking—to fill in the blanks.

But there is no mistaking who owns the central idea in the President's New Year message; it is, it must be, the President herself. The notion of a complete break with a rotten political system entered current public discourse only through Ms Arroyo's "I am sorry" speech.

There is much to be said for the idea; we do not need a practicing politician to tell us that our political system needs drastic reform or even a complete overhaul. But the President's remarkable attempt to indict the culture she grew up in and became so good at is ultimately an attempt to evade accountability for more specific acts. By claiming, "The system made all of us do it," she must have hoped to avoid answering for the allegedly wiretapped conversations with election expert Virgilio Garcillano. But if by her appeal to "break from the past and face a brave new future" she was asking the public to move on and, perhaps, join the "great debate" (again, her words) on Charter change, then we can say with certainty that her appeal will go unheeded.

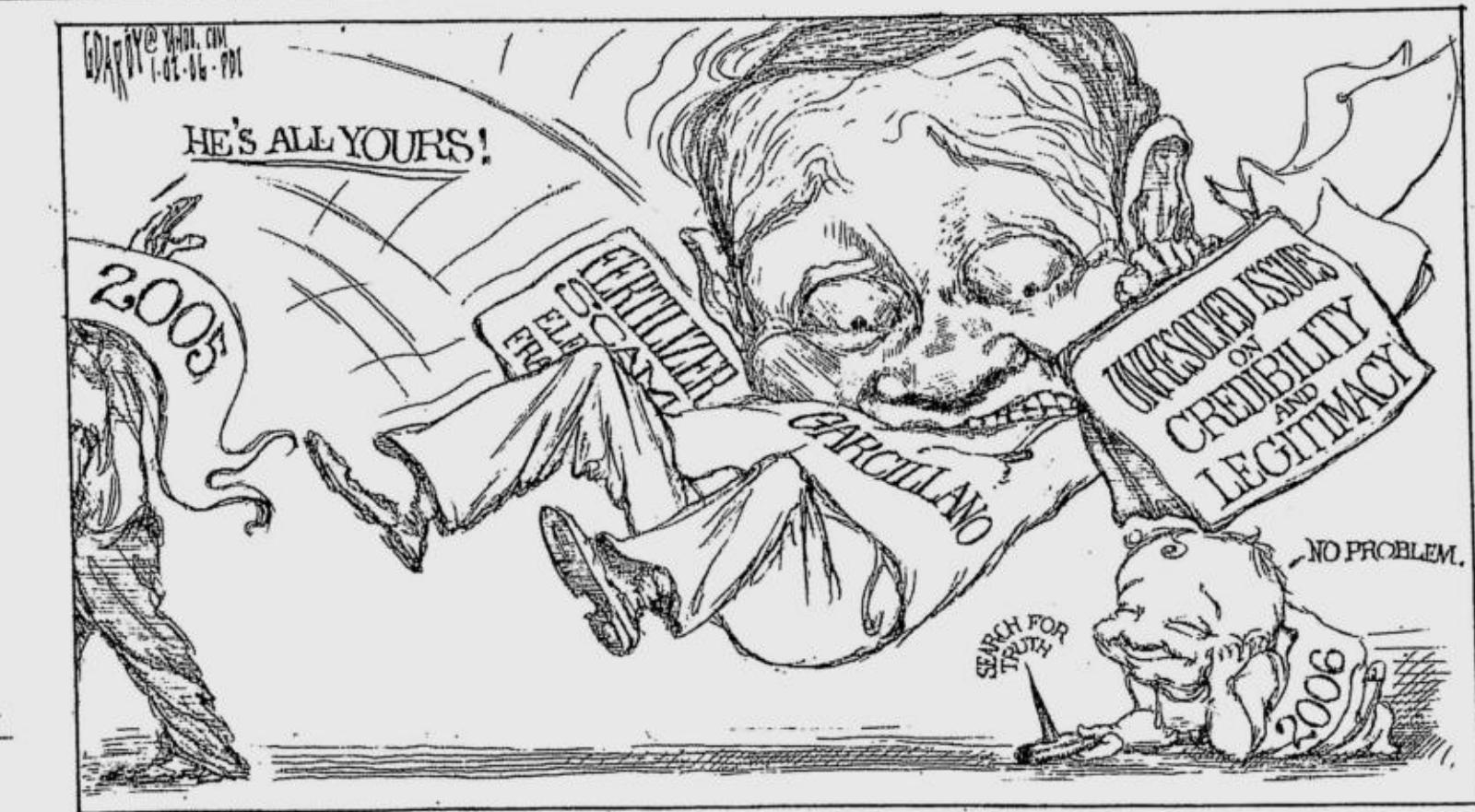
The reality is, the day of reckoning is still to come. No amount of good news on the macro-economic front will mask that. No act of political legerdemain will magically push Charter change to the next level unless the Senate is ready. And no tinkering with the political or legislative calendars will alter the fact that, when the third session of the 13th Congress opens in July, new impeachment complaints against the President will be filed, and another impeachment crisis will be upon us.

That is the future that lies ahead of us; it is neither brave nor new, only inevitable. From the point of view of a functioning democracy, it is also necessary.

In fact, President Arroyo is treading dangerous ground when she wraps her administration's colors around the latest macro-economic numbers. The appreciating peso is a double-edged sword because, of course, a stronger peso also means more expensive Philippine exports and, ironically, lesser purchasing power for OFW families.

Also, respected economists, such as Cielito Habito, have raised superior arguments to explain why they think all may not be well with the domestic economy. Even one of the government's economic managers has already pointed out the obvious: One reason OFW remittances are so important now is that domestic growth has not been as robust as expected.

In economics, as in politics, the day of reckoning may be delayed, but it cannot be denied.



Don't believe those predictions

AS I SEE IT



Neal H. Cruz

THIS IS THAT TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN fortune-tellers, psychics, astrologers, stargazers, soothsayers, crystal gazers, card and palm readers of all sizes, ages, and sexes come out of the woodwork and predict what's going to happen in the new year. Whatever you call them, they're all the same. Most of them are charlatans, fakes, impostors, frauds, cheats, quacks, pretenders, etc. For nobody can really tell the future, except a criminal who plans to murder somebody or a politician planning to cheat in an election. They're all pulling our legs. But media, for lack of anything else better to broadcast or publish during the season, give them their few minutes or several column inches of fame. And so they come out at this time like a plague and pretend to tell the future. In so doing, they "idolize" Filipinos and make them believe in superstitions and other forms of hogwash.

They get away with it because when their predictions don't come true during the year, nobody remembers. The people are preoccupied with listening to more predictions from more fortune-tellers. And when an event remotely resembling a prediction happens, the fortune-teller who made that prediction trumps it to the world and never lets the people forget it for years to come.

The only person I know whose prediction is coming true to the last detail these days is—guess who?—President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Four years ago, on Rizal Day in Baguio, she said, as she promised not to run for president in the elections of 2004 (I am quoting from the Dec. 30 editorial of the INQUIRER): "If I were to run, it would require a major political effort on my part. But since I am among the principal figures in the divisive national events of the last two or three years, my political efforts can only result in never-ending divisiveness. On the other hand, relieved of the burden of politics, I can devote the last year and a half of my administration to the following: First, strengthening the economy to create more jobs, and to encourage business activity that is unhampered by corruption and red tape in government. Second, healing the deep divi-

sions within our society. Third, working for clean and honest elections in 2004."

Everything that she predicted has come true. Because she broke her promise not to run, the country is now torn apart by "never-ending divisiveness." It will not end even with the end of the old year, and it will not end in the new year. It will end only when she gives up the position that she has usurped.

For instead of "working for clean and honest elections in 2004," she, in a "mighty political effort" with the help of Garcí, et al., made it the dirtiest in the history of the Philippines. And although the peso has strengthened—not because of her but because of the remittances of overseas Filipino workers (who have to work in other countries because she has not been able to create more jobs for them)—corruption and red tape are still rampant in government. And instead of "healing the deep divisions in our society," she has, as she predicted, only worsened the divisiveness.

If Ate Glue leaves Malacañang, she can do a better job telling fortunes in Quiapo.

While the year is still young, I will hazard a prediction myself (though I admit I can be wrong, considering the characters, tricks, ambition and determination of politicians): the Senate will not dance the Cha-cha this year. The administration does not have the numbers in the Senate as it has in the House. Cha-cha needs a two-thirds majority to pass in the Senate. There are 23 senators. You need only six votes to defeat it. There are already eight opposition senators, and most of the administration senators are also against it. Right now, there are only two senators

who are openly for it: Angara and Enrile.

Here's another prediction: Joe de Venecia will not become prime minister this year or the next. Neither will Fidel V. Ramos.

And here's another: In the remote possibility that our system of government is changed to parliamentary because of the combined efforts of Ate Glue, FVR and JDV, this Gang of Three, this Unholy Trinity, will double-cross one another during the elections for prime minister.

JDV thinks he has the full support of his provincemate, FVR, for the prime ministership, but the former may be up for a disappointment. Because he is not disqualified from running, FVR can run for Member of Parliament in his district in Pangasinan. Once in Parliament, enough fellow MPs can be made to elect him PM. Sorry na lang kay JDV. FVR can always say: "What can I do? How can I refuse the call of my country?"

FVR and JDV also think that Ate Glue will not contest the prime ministership. One would think that she has had her fill of high office after two terms as president. But ambition and delusion know no bounds. Because she is not banned by the proposed Constitution from running, she can run for MP in her district in Pampanga. Once in Parliament, as the immediate former president, she will have the edge in the contest for the position of PM. Sorry na lang kay FVR and JDV.

So you can expect more divisiveness if we change to a parliamentary system.

And here is a final prediction: The presidency of the University of the Philippines will no longer have the respect it used to have. The reputation of the UP presidency will be forever tarnished. Why?

Because one former UP president allowed himself to be used by politicians for political ends—when he accepted the chairmanship of the Consultative Commission, which was created for only one purpose: to draft an idiotic Constitution made to order for Ate Glue. That's enough to make UP alumni and students puke.

Deeply upright, deeply crooked

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

of law, the very way we conceive of ourselves as Filipinos.

We have the formal properties of democracy, but we do not have the essence of democracy.

We have elections, we have a free press, we have civil liberties, but the rich are never jailed for all sorts of crimes, including murder; taxes are treated as gratuity to public officials and not as funds to give back in roads and bridges; the people are powerless to seek redress for grievances.

The essence of democracy is a strong people, not a strong republic. A strong people is what we do not have. Indeed, today,

we are hard put to find even the formal properties of democracy. We have elections but the votes are stolen, we have a free press but journalists are murdered for reporting wrongdoing, we have civil liberties but they are curtailed at every turn in the name of fighting terror.

Yet we pride ourselves with being a democracy because we go through the motions of having one. It is not unlike a rapist, murderer and wife-beater who goes to church in his Sunday best, believing a few Our Father's, Hail Mary's and Glory Be's will expunge his soul of sin.

The same is true of law. Nowhere will you find more lawyers than in this country, but nowhere will you find more lawlessness than in this country.

This is a country that believes—or doesn't mind if people believe it or not—that if you go through a legal process, what comes out at the end of it must be legal. When in fact all it really does is repeat the fundamental characteristic of a PC: garbage in, garbage out. I personally thought I had seen the worst uses of law during Marcos' time, when the law was directly conscripted to

foment lawlessness. When the law was used to justify repression, pillage and mayhem. When it was used to thwart justice, goodness and decency. I never thought I'd live to see it repeated so soon.

Five years ago, as a result of the impeachment trial, every kid wanted to be a lawyer once again, with Hilario Davide showing how the law could be used for the loftiest ends. Last month, as a result of Virgilio Garcillano's resurrection, enrollment in law schools is likely to reach an all-time low. Less we forget, Garcillano is a lawyer, living proof how the law is currently being used for the lowliest ends. But that is government's tack today, as it was in Marcos' time: We have the letter of the law, we have law.

It's the same as well of Filipino identity. The truly ironic thing that happened last year was the attempt to disqualify Fernando Poe Jr. from running for president on the ground that he wasn't a Filipino. As it turned out, of course, the legal grounds were completely manufactured, the product of perjury and tampered evidence.

But quite apart from that, it boggled the mind that the one person who had pretty much defined for several generations of Filipinos what being Filipino meant—Ang Panday, Agila, Asedillo, Totoy Baio, Daniel Barrion, Batang Quiapo—who had shown a loyalty and dedication to country beyond the call of "Action!"—should be considered a fake Filipino. While the one person who had always boasted about studying in the United States and having Bill Clinton for classmate, who flew the flag of America, who so believed in George W. Bush heart and soul that she was willing to imperil the OFWs in the Middle East to join the fellow's unholy crusade in Iraq, should be adjudged a dyed-in-the-wool, bona fide, out-and-out, Filipino.

"Ganda ng pormal" (It looks good!) is a phrase we often use to admire things. At its best, it means we have aesthetics; at its worst, it means we're suckers for appearances. That's what makes us what we are: deeply upright, deeply crooked.

Unleashing the coco potential

COMMENTARY

Ronna D. Mercado,
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THE RECENT TRIUMPH IN THE BBC WORLD Challenge of the Philippines' coconet, a soil erosion net made from coconut husks, was welcome news for the country and for the coconut industry, in particular. The recognition—along with the respect won by virgin coconut oil in health circles; the increasing interest in alternative fuel sources, like biodiesel (coco methyl ester); and the market potential for geotextiles (coco-fiber)—points to a brighter future for the coconut industry.

However, despite contributing to the national economy an average annual earning of \$690.5 million during the period 2000-2004, the coconut industry remains in a moribund state, snagged by several problems which are not insurmountable. Among these are low farm productivity due to aging trees and monocropping, low faringate prices, lack of research and development and lack of infrastructure support. All these have also worked to ensure that coconut farmers are among the Philippines' poorest citizens.

Around 90 percent of coconut farmers and farm workers live below the poverty line. A typical coconut farmer earns P12,000 annually or around P33 per day. It is very hard to imagine how a coconut farmer can support a family of six with this kind of income.

To help the farmers and to unleash the potential of the coconut industry, financial resources are undoubtedly needed to fund programs and to address the problems that have long hobbled the industry.

The coco levy fund exists precisely for this purpose. The levy was initially intended by the Marcos administration to address the crisis brought about by an "abnormal situation in the world market for fats and oils." However, succeeding presidential decrees made the levy permanent, and eventually it took the nature of private funds "to be owned by the coconut farmers in their own private capacities."

As history would later show, the coco levy fund

would be used not for the farmers' benefit but to serve the business interests of some Marcos' cronies. With coco levy money, the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) was acquired and used as a springboard to acquire assets and corporations that were used in turn to put the coconut industry under a monopolistic regime. At the same time, coco levy money was also used for purposes that had nothing to do with the industry, such as the acquisition of San Miguel Corp. (SMC) shares.

It was not until four years ago, in December 2001, that the Supreme Court issued a crucial decision in favor of the coconut farmers. After almost 15 years from the filing of cases for the farmers' recovery of the fund, the high court categorically ruled that the money was public fund. This decision gave way to subsequent Sandiganbayan decisions which recognized the coconut farmers as the owners of coco levy-funded assets and corporations.

Despite these court victories, the farmers have yet to actually benefit from the coco levy fund. The Sandiganbayan still has to issue an order directing the execution of the partial summary judgment on the 27-percent SMC-CIIF (Coconut Industry Investment Fund) shares. Expectedly, persons who have vested interests in the coco levy fund refuse to let go of the fund, or parts of it, without a fight. There have been repeated attempts to strike a compromise deal involving the 27-percent SMC-CIIF shares.

An out-of-court settlement is not acceptable because these shares have already been declared

as held by the government in trust for the farmers. The only thing that is left for the Sandiganbayan to do is to declare the decision final and executory. To strike a compromise deal is to favor the very perpetrators of injustice. To compromise is to remove the accountability of those who were responsible for the "systematic plunder of the coconut industry."

An alarming development in the coco levy recovery efforts is the removal of three farmer-directors from the board of UCPB last November. Aside from being vocal with their non-compromising stand, these farmer-directors were against the attempts to use the still contested 20-percent block of SMC shares to pay the UCPB loans of the very people behind the coco levy scam. Even more alarming are the speculations that President Macapagal-Arroyo had a hand in their removal, a move that was effected reportedly to pay political debts incurred when the impeachment case was killed in the House of Representatives.

Unlike other sectors of agriculture, the coconut industry has an enormous pool of funds that can help the industry and its farmers. All that the government has to do is to facilitate the immediate recovery of the coco levy money. During the audit conducted in 1986, it was found out that the original levy had reached the staggering amount of P9.695 billion. At present the levy has an estimated worth of P120 billion. This is a big amount that can go a long way in helping the 25 million people directly and indirectly dependent on the industry. This is equivalent to addressing the economic problems of close to one-third of the country's population.

To borrow the words of the solicitor general in his Aug. 8, 2005 Motion for Execution, the proper use of the levy assets "could be the only hope to genuinely address the multifarious and complicated problems in the coconut industry and the long-standing hardship in the lives of the millions of coconut farmers."

Teacher quality

THE "EDUCATION REVOLUTION," WHICH OUR GROUP, the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWPP), started Oct. 12, 2002, is a "running revolution."

Figuratively, two legs power this advocacy. One of them is "community action," where education stakeholders—meaning parents, local business, and private citizens, like you and me—work hand-in-hand with the school faculty to make quality education a continuing community priority and aspiration.

We already talked briefly about community action in our previous commentary, although we did not tell you everything about it; we will do so in future issues.

Today, let's talk about the other leg of the Education Revolution, called "Mentoring the Mentors." (Don't ask us which leg it is, right or left. You see, both are essential and completely important to each other, just like the legs of SEA Games gold medalists Eduardo Buenavista and Merceditas Manipol.)

What exactly is Mentoring the Mentors? This program is a true "Teacher Quality Initiative" that goes beyond plain teacher training.

The experience begins with eight intensive and highly interactive modules conducted over a five-day period. We won't have enough space to delve into a detailed description of each module.

Suffice it to say that the entire series of sessions aims to introduce the power of "Mentoring" as a new approach to focused learning and self-managed professional development.

Dr. Eve Mejillano, Mentoring the Mentors national coordinator, says that "behind every successful person, there is someone, somewhere, somehow who cared about his or her growth and development. This person was the mentor."

Dr. Mejillano's point brings us to the real meaning of "teacher quality."

The teacher exerts a major influence on the young learner's personality development, often as profound as that of the parents. Aside from her mastery of the subject matter, the teacher's personality traits, her likes and dislikes, even her moods and frailties, all have bearing on the child's formative years.

In pursuing teacher quality, the Mentoring the Mentors Program gives equal importance to skill and motivation. The strategies that a teacher uses to improve learning outcomes form only one part of the equation. Her commitment to inspiring a culture of excellence and positive values in her wards completes the picture.

The Mentoring the Mentors Program's training design is very flexible and highly adaptive. In the course of three years, the FWPP has conducted compact three-day sessions for senior superintendents and regional directors of the Department of Education. At other times, our sessions have been expanded to be more relevant for the faculty of schools and courses dedicated to teacher formation or education.

And how did Mentoring the Mentors come to life? It all started at a dinner where I happened to be seated beside Ms Chinit Delgado-Rufino. The event was purely social until we got into the subject of what Ms Rufino's Marie Eugenie Institute—based in Assumption San Lorenzo—had been doing these days.

It turned out that Ms Rufino has been implementing an extremely effective teacher formation program for Assumption schools nationwide. Yes, dear reader, Assumption mission schools can be found as far as in the hinterlands of Kida-

pan. The conversation took a very interesting turn when Ms Rufino started to discuss social transformation through the education system. Ms Rufino—or Chinit as she prefers to be called—in turn introduced us to Ms. Lirio Ongpin Mapa from the Center for Leadership and Change.

Not long after, we were privileged to meet Dr. Celia Adriano and Dr. Eve Mejillano, both sterling educators from the University of the Philippines. The two shared our belief that quality education is the key to genuine change and that the teachers have a vital role in this regard. The two educators—not surprisingly—also have quite a number of very workable teaching skills modules.

When Chinit, Celia and Eve got together, it was as if a fire was lit. And the seeds of the Education Revolution was sown.

In 2003, principals and master teachers from all 50 public schools in the Iloilo City schools division led by Mrs. Ida Endonila—their superintendent at that time—participated in the pilot implementation of the FWPP's Teacher Quality Initiative: the Mentoring the Mentors Program.

Since then, Chinit, Celia, Eve and Lirio have been all over the country, from Region X and XI in Mindanao, Region VI and VII in the Visayas and Region IV in Luzon.

As of this writing, over 2,000 educators—from DepEd school principals and master teachers to superintendents and regional directors to the deans and faculty of "teacher education institutions"—have joined the Education Revolution through the Mentoring the Mentors Program.

The interactive sessions are just the beginning of the experience for the participants. At the last session, the new "mentors-in-training" prepare an action plan which they commit to implement when they resume their duties at their respective schools. For instance:

Butuan City Schools Division

"I will personally and professionally reach out to my fellow teachers and to the community" to make them conscious of how important quality education is for the community as a whole. - Ms. Elena Dasilao;

"I will consistently look into the improvement of my pupils' learning." - Ms. Preciosa Bulaldo

Batangas City Schools Division

"Sisikap kong makatulong sa paghugob ng mga kabataan upang imaging maka-Diyos, maka-Kalikasan, maka-tao at makabayan" (I commit to help our youth become God-centered, environment-conscious and respectful of the rights of others as individuals and as one people). - Ms. Jenith Abucay

"I will strive to inculcate in the community the importance of being a leader in the school." - Mr. Crescito Tenorio

CARAGA region

"I will become an advocate of change, since I see this as a serious problem not just in our education system, but in the entire country as well." - Ms. Conchita Ubay

"I shall always project a cheerful disposition, smile and greet the people because I want my pupils to learn by example." - Ms. Emalina Tabarana

Finally, from the Iligan City Schools Division

"I should be the model [for change] and that it should start with me." - Ms. Vivian Santiago

"I will do everything I can to get more facilities and teaching aids form the pupils in my school so they can learn more easily." - Mr. Alex Bado

The action plans are as diverse as the participants' backgrounds but they have a common goal: quality education through quality teaching.

Keeping the fire burning

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II



law book, UP law professor, and with First Philippine Holdings, updated our Manila group.

In our past projects, it was easy to turn to classmates who had the wherewithal. Invariably, the class would turn to Chito Santos, president of Philippine Phosphates. At other times, it would be Cito Lorenzo, former agriculture secretary. An American classmate, Henry Howard, was already supporting nine poor college students when our class started to adopt its own scholars. This time, Special Care appears to be everyone's concern.

"Society calls me a beggar, an eyesore, and a parasite. But what do you call a society that has reduced me to this state?" A Brazilian cleric raised this question some years back. The Special Children project all brought us to the core problem of our society. The conversations at the reunion at times turned to the Gloria-Garcia tapes. Many are not GMA fans, including myself. But GMA bashing is not the solution. Neither is it the opposition, many of whom were into cheating themselves and equally deserve to be booted out.

Things are going wrong because of a society that has no more place for God. The day we put God in the center of a society that thinks no more of God as it does with a choice in a cafeteria fast-food menu, that will be the day when children will no longer be abandoned by their parents.

The third volume of Capitol University's MINDAYAWAN Journal of Culture and Society is out of the press. This volume's special issue on ethnicity has the essays and papers of Dr. Maragtas Amante of the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations, Dr. Fe Rosales Juarez, Dr. Margarita "Tingting" de los Reyes Cojuangco, Dr. Nagasura Madale, and Prof. Geldolin Inte. Single-issue subscriptions are minimally priced at P150.

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

Refocusing on Roxas

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



conventional view taught in most schools.

As time passes by, the conventional view that Roxas was an American stooge may be facing serious challenge. One example of how a reexamination of Roxas' actions can result in a more favorable appraisal of him can be gleaned from the late Bonifacio S. Salamanca's article in Philippine Studies (Vol. 37, 3rd Quarter 1989) titled "Quezon, Osmeña and Roxas and the American Military Presence in the Philippines." In the article, Salamanca traces the development of the Philippine government's attitude towards the American bases. Quezon, who had nothing against naval bases, used the Hare-Hawes-Cutting provision (which allowed military bases on land) to whip up support for his "anti-position"; Roxas and Osmeña defended it.

Later, during World War II, Quezon would change his mind and enter into talks to allow US bases (naval and air) after the war was won. When he died, Osmeña was quite happy to adopt the same position.

And so was Roxas when he became President. He assigned Elpidio Quirino, in his capacity as foreign affairs secretary, to conduct negotiations with the domineering American ambassador Paul V. McNutt. Salamanca then describes how Roxas and Quirino played a "good-cop, bad-cop routine," with Roxas as the good cop, to whom the exasperated McNutt would run whenever Quirino stood up for Filipino interests. The result was an agreement which turned out more favorable to the Philippines.

A reexamination of Roxas presidency may lead to the conclusion that he secured a better deal for the country than might otherwise have been expected, just as Magsaysay, who continues to be excoriated by the Left, was responsible for the Laurel-Langley Agreement which shortened the duration of the Bases Agreement.

But these things will remain controversial for a long time to come. As a chief executive, Roxas delegated power freely, was confident of his own capacity, and was an energetic campaigner. He is the prototype of an effective leader, campaigner and executive in the modern age.

HIGH SCHOOL REUNIONS SELDOM ATTRACTED me. Rather ho-hum activities to me. There were times when I chose to be elsewhere. Many such reunions are rather "symptoms of miseducation." Reviving the old rah-rah yells of yesteryears is one such symptom. In an old all-boys school, some high school reunions often include activities that are good only for the netherworld.

I am proud to say that my own high school class does not hold reunions of that kind. Predictability is our only problem. We meet on the same day each year, every Dec. 28 to be exact. I do not recall now how the date was chosen. All I know is it has nothing to do with the feast of the holy innocents.

But this year was extra special. My Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan high-school class of 1975 had wanted our 30th year to signify the "spirit kept alive beyond 30." I got a surprise when our classmates decided that instead of having the usual lavish Christmas party, our class would hold a special lunch with special children.

Unknown to me, our class had started a project with an orphanage that's getting little public and civic attention because it is run by a government agency. The Reception and Study Center for Children is under the Department of Social Welfare and Development's Region 10 office.

The RSSC is not your typical, straitjacket orphanage. It is on the lookout specifically for children abandoned by parents, disabled children, and children orphaned by armed conflicts. Each of the 34 little wards at RSSC has a heart-breaking story to tell.

One was left in a garbage dump. Another was left in the mail by her mother. One was left in a church doorstep. Four little tykes have cerebral palsy. A few are autistic. Some are disabled. One little boy is blind. A little baby girl has microcephalus. The only thing they share in common

is their parents do not want them.

But the Christmas party my classmates came up with was not the usual one-shot activity highlighted by gift-giving and picture-taking that amount to nothing but PR hype. My classmates went a step farther. They have actually decided earlier last year that the class should adopt the center and help it meet its financial needs. Thus was born the project "Special Care for Special Children."

The class started by taking care of the monthly salary of a caregiver and nursing assistant. As of this writing, the equivalent of a year's salary for the two has been pledged.

My high school class is also supporting two college students. Four years ago, we organized the Fr. Antonio M. Cuna SJ Memorial Scholarship Foundation, in honor of a favorite Jesuit mentor. But this special children project is something else. This one just simply hit all of us in the gut in that reunion. And for the rest of that day, we were left in a rather contemplative mood.

The project is the brainchild of two classmates: Ruben "Benjie" Paras, our outgoing class president, manages his family's engineering and construction firm. Serge Firmacion, the project's chairman, is busy with his purified water business. It was our incoming president Lourd Ostique who kept us all in touch by short messaging and e-mail. For many years, she was the curator of Museo de Oro. Rodolfo Waga Jr., author of a

MANUEL Roxas (NO "A" IN THE MIDDLE, please; he hated using that middle initial because it would spell out "MAR," a word which means "blemish"), remains a man much maligned by the few people who have not forgotten him completely. But Roxas remains an important example of the timeless charismatic leader—more than, say, Ramon Magsaysay who undoubtedly saved the Republic. But I think Magsaysay, like his predecessor Manuel Quezon and successor Corazon Aquino, were lucky accidents for our country. They could succeed only once and cannot be copied or emulated. They were all too unique and flourished under unique circumstances.

It is realistic to expect another Roxas, though. This is so because the Quezonian type of leadership ("caudillo paternalism," some called it) was made obsolete by Magsaysay's version of strong-man rule; besides, much of Quezon's success lay in his being the lobbyist par excellence in the United States, where his being a *mestizo* possibly made him more acceptable than the Chinese-looking Sergio Osmeña Sr., or the Filipino-looking Roxas, to Caucasian racists; and, of course, Palace control of the legislature has never been equaled since the pre-war Commonwealth. MLQ's flashy rule reached a dead end. In Magsaysay's case, he changed the way leaders commune with their constituents. But after his unique personality was gone, it was obvious that the only way leaders could hold on to power was through the time-honored methods of patronage. Another dead end.

In Cory Aquino's case, she was the right person at the right time. But someone like her, a political outsider without the usual "qualifications" for political office, cannot thrive in a normal political atmosphere. On the other hand, Roxas, who derived a great deal of his success from his being young and brilliant, and from his being an economist when economics determined many issues of the day.

Filipinos have always admired intellectual brilliance and prefer their leaders to be young and vigorous. (That is why Miriam Santiago never

fails to remind people of her academic distinctions; and that was why a lot of voters decided not to vote for former Senate President Jovito Salonga who was too old when he ran for president.)

Roxas was the wunderkind of the politics of his day, lampooned in cartoons which portrayed him in a little boy's sailor suit; and presiding over the House (of which he became Speaker at the age of 30). He was a charismatic man, an eloquent speaker, a bar top-not

GMA wants Halsema repair rushed

BAGUIO CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the Department of Public Works and Highways to speed up construction of a section of the Halsema

Highway, which links this city to other parts of Benguet and Mt. Province.

During the 109th Rizal Day rites here on Friday, the Presi-

dent asked Mariano Alquiza, DPWH Cordillera director, about the funding status of the highway's rehabilitation, which Ms Arroyo said she wants completed in honor of her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal. Ms Arroyo said the improvement of Halsema was started during her father's incumbency in the 1960s.

Alquiza said the government has spent P1.4 billion to complete portions of the highway.

He promised Ms Arroyo that a full report and a comprehensive financial profile of the project will be submitted at the start of the year to help accelerate work on the incomplete sections, according to Baguio Councilor Leandro Yangot. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

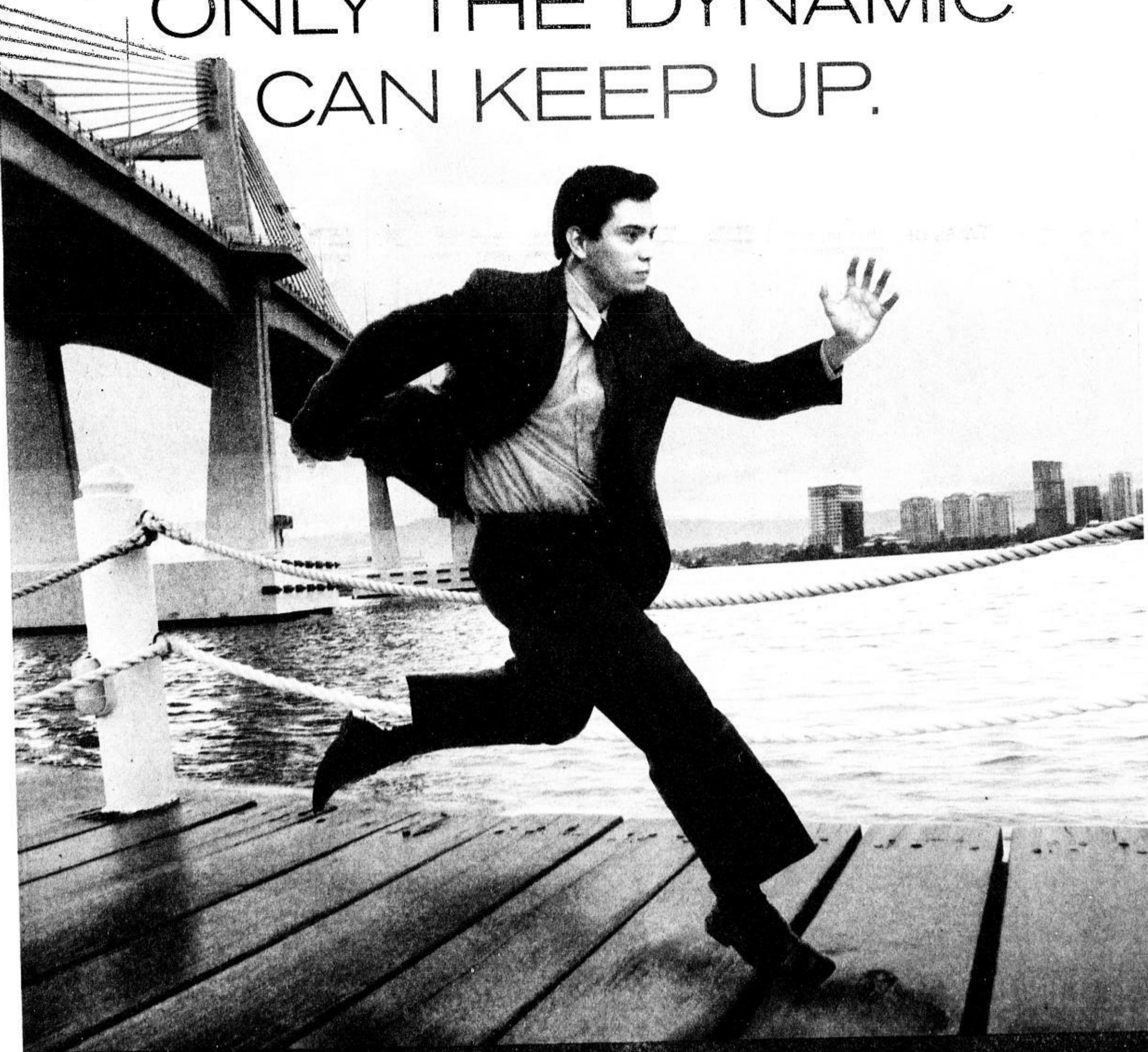


FRUITFUL

Passion and anonas fruits are endemic in the Cordillera hinterlands and become expensive because of a New Year's belief that round fruits bring good luck.

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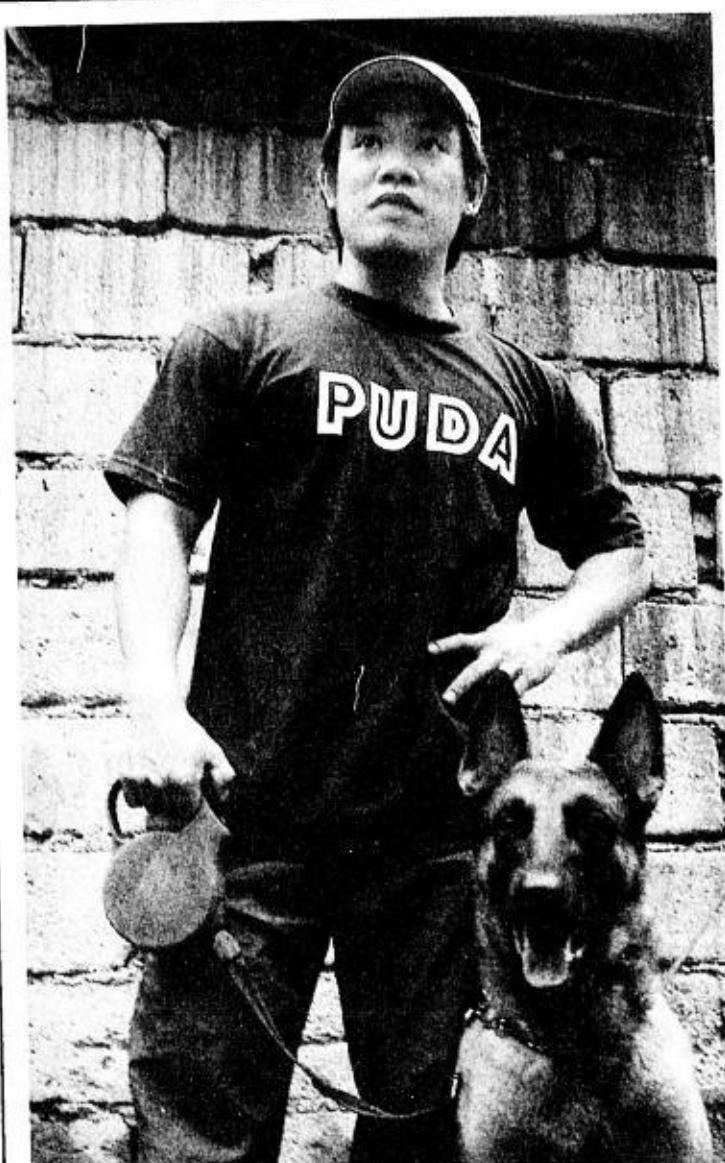
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DOG TRAINER Jay Michael Lim: Turning a hobby into a successful business. RODEL ROTONI

Makati businessman is dog's best friend

By Maricris Irene V. Tamolang
Contributor

YOU MIGHT SAY THAT JAY Michael Lim's business is, literally, going to the dogs.

Lim, 27, is a business administration graduate, major in entrepreneurship, of the Colegio de San Juan de Letran. He trains protection dogs for a living.

The business-minded Lim, however, is not solely into dog training for the money. "My job is more of a passion now," he told the INQUIRER. "If not for money, what else would others do it for?"

A full-time trainer since last year, Lim is the head of the Genesis K9 training center.

TV show started it all

His interest in dogs began in 2002 after watching an episode of the now defunct "Pets Unlimited" show on Channel 5. The show featured pitbulls trained by Noel Austria, owner of the Spratty K9 training center in Guadalupe, Nuevo, Makati.

Austria is also the founder of the Philippine Utility Dog Association (Puda), the first and only organization in the country that certifies dogs that pass its protection dog trials.

After the show, Lim said he contacted Austria to ask if he could train his dog, Sauron, a pitbull.

From being an observer on the sidelines, however, Lim gradually began to take a more active interest in the business.

When Austria left last year for the US, he turned over the business to Lim who changed the name of the training center from Spratty K9 to Genesis K9.

Lim is the owner of seven dogs of different breeds. It takes him four hours just to feed and groom his pets. Ever the meticulous owner, he brings them to the veterinarian for regular checkups.

Skilled trainer

Lim takes pride in being the handler of Mulatto, a dog with a Puda trial title. "Mulatto is the first Belgian Malinois which placed first in the first Puda nationals in December 2003," he said.

His dog, Sauron, which now has a new owner, is the only pitbull that placed first in the trials held in October and November 2003 and second in the national competition against imported dog breeds like Malinois and German

Shepherds.

Puda trials are divided into three categories: Sport Dog, Reality and Obedience. Dogs of all breed can join the trials provided they can perform the required exercises.

Those that pass the standard are issued a certificate of title.

The sport dog trial includes exercises to test a canine's obedience, agility and protection skills. The obedience trial includes obedience and agility exercises.

The Puda national championships are held every last quarter of the year. Only dogs that have attained the required average point for the trials that they had competed in are allowed to enter.

"I have already trained various dogs of different breeds," said Lim. Among the dogs were an English bulldog, a Labrador, an Australian Shepherd, pitbulls and a Siberian Husky.

Although he does not prefer any specific breed for protection training, he said that shepherds are easier to train because they learn more quickly. However, he favors pitbulls for their strength and physique.

Pitbulls are also more aggressive compared to other breeds which, Lim said, give them an edge in patrol job training.

Keen observing eye

Lim said aspiring trainers should develop a keen eye for observing a canine's behavior. This would help them read a dog's body language, whether through its eye, tail or other body movements, and predict its response to commands.

"Many dog enthusiasts wish to be a good trainer but only few have the gift for it," he said. Being fond of animals, however, is a good enough start, he added.

Training is also easier when the trainer takes time to bond with his student first.

"Give him treats, words of praise or just pet him," Lim said.

It's a tough job, he admitted. More now and then, his patience snaps. He feels fortunate, however, that what started as a hobby has become a successful business.

"I feel blessed because everyday expenses come from it now, including my children's tuition," said Lim.

"Dog training is not just a hobby for me anymore. It is now a means of living," he added.

By Christine Gaylican

THE METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS AND Sewerage System (MWSS) has approved an upward tariff adjustment of P1.86 per cubic meter for west zone customers being serviced by the Maynilad Water Services Inc.

The new rate will take effect on the second week of January.

For a household consuming an average of 10 to 30 cubic meters a month, the new adjustment will mean an average increase of P18.60 to P55.80.

Since the water company declared bankruptcy in 2004, state-run MWSS has taken over the management of the west zone concession that services 5.6 million customers in Manila and nearby cities.

According to MWSS Deputy Administrator Macra Cruz, the MWSS Board of Trustees has asked Maynilad to publish the new rates in the next 15 days in two major newspapers of national circulation before it can be officially collected.

The new tariff rates to be applied by Maynilad will reflect automatic adjustments for inflation (consumer price index) due to the increase in higher power costs last year.

Maynilad's service area covers all of Manila, except San Andres and Sta. Ana, parts of Quezon City, parts of Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, Malabon, Cavite City and some towns in Cavite.

Meanwhile, a coalition of people's organizations under the Water for the People Network has criticized the impending water rate adjustment in Metro Manila as it cited the poor service in several barangays in Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City where residents have no choice but to pay Maynilad even if the utility firm has failed to deliver a single drop of water for more than a year now.

"They continue to pay the minimum charge to Maynilad out of fear of 'disconnection' and in the hope that the company would soon fulfill its obligations," the civic group said in a statement.

The residents of Barangays 142, 144, 146, 149, 153, and 157 have been relying on water rations being provided by the city government.

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Gym

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3 fires hit Manila, Mandaluyong

By Margaux C. Ortiz

OVER P1 MILLION WORTH OF PROPERTY was destroyed when three separate fires ravaged residential areas in the cities of Manila and Mandaluyong yesterday.

FO1 Guillermo Fernalino said firecrackers may have caused the fires that destroyed four houses and around 10 shanties in Tondo, Manila.

Fernalino said the first fire began at 12:10 a.m. on the roof of the Macabante family's two-story house on Dela Cruz St., Hermosa Manuguit, Tondo.

The fire reached the fifth alarm and damaged three other nearby houses, he added.

The fire, which was put out at 1:44 a.m., destroyed P250,000 worth of property.



YEAR OF THE DOG

Habagat, a show dog, is in his element this year, 2006 being the Year of the Dog in the Chinese calendar. JOAN BONDOC

Never again, vow victims

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Nancy C. Carvajal

her only son of the dangers of carelessly handling firecracker powder.

"He did not listen to me and now this has happened," she said, pointing to her son's burnt eyebrows and eyelashes.

The boy was just one of the 70 victims of firecracker explosions brought to the JRRMMC on the first day of the year.

Manny, 12, of Sta. Cruz, Laguna, made the mistake of gathering leftover firecracker powder, according to his mother Zenaida.

The powder exploded when he lit it with embers from his aunt's kitchen stove, burning his face and hair.

"I'm used to collecting leftover firecracker powder during the past New Year celebrations," Manny told the INQUIRER in an interview at the emergency room of the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center (JRRMMC) in Manila.

"I did not know it would explode this time," the boy added with a forlorn look on his face.

Zenaida said she had always warned

vendor to give me simple firecrackers," she said.

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James, Cavs bring 'A' game, cool off red-hot Pistons

CLEVELAND—LEBRON

James had 30 points, seven rebounds and seven assists as the Cleveland Cavaliers cooled off the red-hot Detroit Pistons, downing them 97-84 in National Basketball Association play on Saturday in Cleveland.

James celebrated his 21st birthday on Friday and followed it up with a strong performance Saturday, also blocking four shots as Cleveland ended Detroit's nine-game winning streak.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 18 points for the Cavaliers, who handed the Pistons just their fourth loss of the season as Detroit fell to 24-4.

"We knew we had to bring our 'A' game and that's what we did," James told reporters afterwards.

Drew Gooden added 12 points and picked up 13 rebounds for the Cavs and said his team knew the importance of getting a win over the NBA's best team to date.

"That's the best team in the league," Gooden said.

Larry Hughes chipped in with 16 points for the Cavaliers, who are 13-3 at home and have beaten the Pistons at their last three meetings, and at four of the last five, as they try to keep them within sight in the Central Division standings.

The Pistons shot a season-low 36 percent and trailed by 19 points in the first half and by as many as 20 in the third quarter before a late rally made the score a little more respectable.



THERE was no stopping LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers.

House then made a 3-pointer to make it a seven-point game. And after a layup by Chicago's Ben Gordon, House threw a perfect bounce pass to Marion for a one-handed dunk that made it 103-96 with 43.5 seconds left.

In Houston, Baron Davis scored 23 points and Jason Richardson added 22 to help Golden State hold off the Rockets, 94-89.

Davis also had seven assists and five rebounds and Richardson added six rebounds and five assists for the Warriors, who have won three straight games. Together, the backcourt duo went 6-for-15 from 3-point range.

In Salt Lake City, Andrei Kirilenko converted a three-point play with 18.9 seconds remaining and Utah rallied to defeat Philadelphia, 108-102.

The Jazz blew a 15-point lead and needed to rally from a six-point deficit in the fourth quarter, scoring the final seven points of the game and spoiling Allen Iverson's 37-point night for Philadelphia.

In Denver, Tim Duncan scored 25 points and Manu Ginobili added 20 off the bench in San Antonio's 98-88 win over Denver.

With Ginobili still working his way back from a foot injury, the defending NBA champs now sport the league's best bench. Ginobili played 24 minutes and had his best performance since returning from an eight-game absence on Monday night.

In Seattle, Dahntay Jones made a one-handed 4.3-meter (14-foot) shot with 6.6 seconds left, and the Memphis Grizzlies held off the SuperSonics, 100-96.

In Los Angeles, Ricky Davis scored 20 points, Paul Pierce added 19 and Boston downed the Los Angeles Clippers, 111-92, to snap a six-game road losing streak.

Reuters, AP



HOUSTON Rockets forward Stromile Swift hangs from the

Golf's homecoming produces a year filled with magic, mystique

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA—SOMETHING SPECIAL always seems to happen whenever golf comes home to St. Andrews.

The mystique of the Old Course, where golf has been played for half a millennium, was bound to produce a British Open for the ages. It was to be the final major for Jack Nicklaus, the greatest major champion of them all, and his pose atop the Swilcan Bridge late Friday afternoon became an indelible image.

But from that sun-baked week at St. Andrews emerged so many moments that defined the 2005 season.

Right after the graceful departure of Nicklaus came the defiant return of Tiger Woods. He silenced critics of his swing changes by winning the Masters in a playoff and then dominating the field at St. Andrews to win by five shots, giving him 10 majors in his quest to break Nicklaus' record of 18.

The biggest turnaround belonged to Colin Montgomerie, who whipped the Scottish fans into a flag-waving frenzy on the weekend at St. Andrews. He was the runner-up, his best finish at a major in eight years, and he returned to St. Andrews in October to win the Dunhill Championship. Montgomerie fell as low as No. 83 in the world ranking, but had risen to No. 8 at year's end.

Surprising fall

The surprising fall belonged to Ernie Els, who knew his head was not in the game when he went through the motions at St. Andrews. Turns out that was the last tournament he played for the next four months, as the Big Easy took a big spill during a beach getaway on the Mediterranean, tearing ligaments in his left knee.

Michael Campbell won the US Open at Pinehurst No. 2 to finally fulfill his potential, becoming the first player from New Zealand to win a major since Bob Charles at the 1963 British Open.

One year after Phil Mickelson broke through for his first major, he showed he was hungry for more by winning the US PGA Championship at Baltusrol with a flop shot from deep rough that he practiced in his backyard as a boy. This one settled a few feet from the cup for a birdie on the 72nd hole.

The Americans finally found a couple of cups to take home. They won the Presidents Cup when Chris DiMarco made a birdie on the final hole of the final match to beat a strong International team, and they won the Solheim Cup behind 19-year-old Paula Creamer, who predicted a US victory and delivered 3 1/2 points.



WOODS: Sheer magic at Masters.

Clinging to a one-shot lead over DiMarco, Woods had to pitch to the top of the slope and let it trickle to the hole.

It came off perfectly, the ball making a U-turn at the top of the ridge and slowly heading for the hole. It was losing steam as it approached, hung on the lip for two full seconds to allow the fans to catch their breath, then dramatically dropped for a birdie.

Sheer dominance

There were no such dramatics at St. Andrews, only sheer dominance. Montgomerie challenged him briefly, but the 29-year-old Woods never lost the lead, or control of the championship.

"I've been criticized for the last couple of years. 'Why would I change my game?' This is why," Woods said. "First, second and first in the last three majors. That's why."

Nicklaus loves the Old Course so much that he decided to make it his final major. The 65-year-old Golden Bear is not one for ceremony, but he indulged thousands of fans who gathered around the 18th hole to witness history at the home of golf. They crammed onto rooftops and balconies, pressed their noses against windows and stood on their toes to see the greatest major champion of them all cross the Swilcan Bridge one last time. AP



DENT

AP

Hopman Cup: US advances

PERTH, AUSTRALIA—LISA RAYMOND and Taylor Dent of the United States beat Serbia and Montenegro's Ana Ivanovic and Novak Djokovic, 7-6 (3), 6-2, in their deciding mixed doubles match Sunday at the Hopman Cup.

Earlier at the mixed teams tennis tournament at the Burswood Dome, Ivanovic beat Raymond in women's singles, 6-2, 6-4, and Dent evened the match for the Americans with a 6-1, 6-4 win over Djokovic.

The United States is the most successful country at the tournament, having won the title three

times.

The big-serving Dent and doubles specialist Raymond trailed 4-2 in the opening set before coming back to win the tiebreaker.

"They got off to a fast start, but we just had to hang in there," said Raymond.

The Americans pulled away in the second set, breaking Ivanovic's service in the final game. Dent set up triple match point with a deft crosscourt drop volley, and the Americans won the match two

points later when Djokovic put an attempted return into the net.

Ivanovic said she and Djokovic

should have converted their early lead into a first-set win.

"This was our first time playing mixed doubles," Ivanovic said. "They just played too good. We had some chances in the first set and didn't use it."

Meanwhile, Wayne Arthurs pulled out of the Australian team due to a right calf muscle tear. He incurred the injury in Australia's 2-1 loss to Germany on Saturday.

Todd Reid will replace Arthurs, and since Reid is ranked below Arthurs in singles, Australia will remain eligible for the championship title.

AP

Doubles also on Hingis' schedule

GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA—RUSSIAN-born Tatiana Golovin of France has found a willing doubles partner at the Australian women's hardcourt tennis championships—comeback player Martina Hingis.

Golovin, 17, will partner Hingis in doubles and take on Australia's Nicole Pratt in singles on Monday. Hingis will also play singles Monday, facing 63rd-ranked Maria Venetia Kabuchi of Venezuela in her return to competitive tennis at Royal Pines.

Hingis, who has been off the circuit for three years due to recurring foot injuries, approached Golovin on Friday and asked whether she wanted to play doubles with her.

"She said 'do you want to play?' and I said 'of course,'" Golovin said. "Who doesn't want to play with Martina?"

"I just feel very lucky. We're all very happy

to have her back."

The 25-year-old Hingis, winner of five Grand Slam singles titles, is one of the most successful doubles players as well, claiming nine Grand Slam titles, including four Australian Opens.

She is one of only four women to win all four doubles majors in one year—in 1998.

In first-round singles play Sunday, players from the Czech Republic won three matches, including Lucie Safarova's upset victory over sixth-seeded Ai Sugiyama of Japan.

Safarova beat Sugiyama, 6-1, 6-2, seventh-seeded Klara Koukalova defeated Meghann Shaughnessy of the United States, 6-4, 6-4, and Iveta Benesova downed Australian wild card Sophie Ferguson, 7-5, 6-2.

Meanwhile, in Auckland, New Zealand, Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova headlines one of the strongest fields ever assembled for the Auckland Women's Tennis Classic,

which starts and serves as a tune-up for the Australian Open.

For only the second time in the tournament's 21-year history, the field includes three top-20 players, headed by Russia's Nadia Petrova at number nine, Hantuchova at 15 and Petrova's compatriot Elena Likhovtseva at number 17.

Hantuchova, a former world number five, regained her form last year after struggling for 18 months with weight problems and personal difficulties, and has been the center of attention since arriving here.

She said the intense media glare would not distract her from her ultimate goal—a final showdown with Petrova.

"It's just all part of it. I don't allow it to affect me, to turn it into pressure," said Hantuchova, who will face unheralded Ukrainian Yulia Beygelzimer in the first round.

AP

Quietly saving the best of

BARE EYE



Recab
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ing this terrible sacrifice. Everybody knows he's preparing for the biggest fight of his life.

Pacquiao, RP national sports treasure, is fighting a full-scale, there's-no-tomorrow war against Mexican boxing legend Erik Morales, who had previously gone down and beaten him.

In Manila, Butch Ramirez, head of the Philippine Sports Commission, based they are setting up a national sports institute which should hasten the search for future gold medalists, not on

YOUNG ARTIST RONALD BOHLANDER, visiting again from Dusseldorf, Germany, fretted on the holiday table, wondering.

His ears didn't ring or hurt from all the varied, multi-colored explosions. No soot, unlike last year, in his German nostrils.

The pyrotechnics were there, okay. But there seemed to be a shortage of ammunition.

It's strange. The biggest year for the Pinoy athlete was sent off with what would go down as the shortest, lightest New Year revelry here in years.

The skies lit up, as usual. But in most areas of the metropolis, glorious, colorful fireworks would expire before they could peak to perfect carnival madness.

Base guitarist Emman Diaz surmised that the varied New Year's Eve explosions lasted only 30 minutes.

"Mga alas dose medya, ubos, tapos na (By half past 12 midnight, it was over)," he said yesterday.

Most of the inner streets appeared in

tact, unlike before when they would get mangled, reduced to a pitiful mess the morning after.

So why a short, relatively light celebration when this was the right time to scream and pour it all out?

This was no way to celebrate the overall victory of Team Philippines in the last Southeast Asian Games, whose gold medalists were treated by an overwhelmed government and its First Gentleman to a splurging holiday at the Hong Kong Disneyland.

Why? Who would dare venture an educated guess?

Out there in California, Manny Pacquiao turned 27 on Dec. 17 at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood, away from his family.

For the holidays, the sweetest moments were only phone calls, loving words from his wife and kids in GenSan, as he opted to stay in camp.

Don't dare ask Pacquiao why he's mak-

Kobe's absence opens door for rookie

EL SEGUNDO, CALIFORNIA—THROUGH the first three months of the season, Lakers guard Von Wafer has garnered as much attention for his card playing as anything he has done on an NBA court.

There was nothing subtle about coach Phil Jackson's decision to give Wafer a copy of "Poker for Dummies" when he handed out books to the Lakers players on their six-game road trip last month.

Yet Wafer might have emerged with a winning hand from Friday's news that the NBA suspended Kobe Bryant two games for a flagrant foul on Memphis guard Mike Miller in the fourth quarter Wednesday night.

There is a strong possibility that Wafer, a second-round draft pick who has played

all of six games and 19 minutes as a rookie, will start in Bryant's place against the Utah Jazz at Staples Center.

"Von has a lot of game," Jackson said. "He's an aggressive player. Sometimes you've got to harness him a little bit."

The Lakers are down to just 11 available players, three of them rookies, with Bryant suspended.

Wafer returned to the active roster only last week when guard Laron Profit was lost for the season with a ruptured Achilles tendon.

"I just try not to put too much pressure on myself," Wafer said.

Wafer has been described by Jackson as an "unstoppable" scorer in practice. The 20-year-old guard admitted Saturday

he might benefit from not having to find his rhythm coming off the bench.

"He has a world of talent," Odom added. "He's a great offensive player."

Jackson surprised even the 20-year-old guard by playing him briefly on Christmas against Miami's Dwyane Wade.

The Lakers suffered a scare when Odom twisted his right ankle driving the lane at the end of practice. Odom and Jackson both believe the 6-foot-10 forward's injury was no cause for concern.

Bryant stayed home with the flu and is not allowed to attend either game for which he has been suspended.

Jackson was asked what would have happened in his playing days if Bryant had delivered an elbow to the chin like he

did to Miller.

"That would have instigated a fight," Jackson said. "If you did something like that, it definitely meant that you weren't playing the person as a basketball player; you were out there to initiate rough stuff."

Odom said Friday he wanted all five starters to finish in double figures playing without Bryant. Jackson described his players as "licking their chops" thinking about the 30 shots that are now available for the taking.

"I feel like this offense provides a lot of opportunities," center Chris Mihm added, "and we've got a lot of guys that are, in my mind, very underrated offensively and defensively." *New York Times News Service*

Former Nuggets coach keeps new score

DENVER—IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT AT a hospital where miracles are performed with no guarantee against tears, a basketball coach discovered a new way to keep score.

Jeff Bzdelik walked into Children's Hospital in Denver to save his daughter.

He walked out a better coach, a better father, a better man.

"It's a life-changing experience for any parent who has spent a night in that hospital and watched the sun come up," said Bzdelik, whose child was treated in 2005 for a brain tumor that proved to be benign.

"There are faces of children who will always be on my mind. My family was fortunate to walk out of there. A lot of kids don't. Those kids are some of the toughest people I've ever seen. I would watch a kid fall down with every step, then get right back up and try again."

Dream job

On New Year's Eve of 2004, Bzdelik was unemployed, fired from a dream job in the NBA, run off the Nuggets' bench.

On Jan. 1, 2006, there's a healthy daughter for Bzdelik to hug and the best

little college basketball team in Colorado to call his own.

Any way you score it, Bzdelik has won.

Courtney Bzdelik, a teenage girl who underwent brain surgery last year and lived to tell about it, taught her father how to embrace the endless possibilities of the next big dream, rather than obsess over what could have been.

"It makes you stop and think every day," said Bzdelik, grinning at the memory of waiting in line for the hospital shower at 4:30 a.m., when the mother of a sick child remarked the scene reminded her of summer camp.

Not an option

"Winning a basketball game? I remember the surgeon telling me, 'I can't afford to have a bad day.' A professional athlete might say, 'Aw, we had an off night.' For the folks at Children's Hospital, that's not an option."

"I can picture the nurses who came into my daughter's room at 3 o'clock in the morning, full of passion. Our surgeon worked harder, put in longer hours, than I ever did in my coaching career. And his job is life or death."

Friends call him Coach Buzz. It's more than a nickname. It's the energy Bzdelik produces.

His intensity is so high voltage, being close to Bzdelik is akin to standing under a power line. You can hear the passion that buzzes through his veins.

Little difference

Red lights. Roses. It made little difference. Coach Buzz was not built to stop for anything.

Down 20 points in the fourth quarter, he would demand a timeout and furiously scribble a play for the Nuggets. He argued with refs like a \$400 per hour lawyer. It wore people out.

"Basketball has always been just a part of my life. But it has become a smaller part of my life. Is that good? I don't think it's good; I know it's good. It makes you a better coach," said Bzdelik.

"I'm revealing things that aren't easy. But now there's a human side of me maybe players can see. Instead of the team panicking under stress, we can have a little levity. I told my players the other day, in my 30 years of coaching, I've never had so much fun."

Coming from Bzdelik, it was nothing

but the truth.

After being dumped by the Nuggets 28 games into last season, coach Buzz put down roots deeper in Colorado soil.

Down the road from his house, Bzdelik took a job far from the klieg lights of the NBA, filling a distinctly unglamorous position vacant for the second time in two years.

For decades, Air Force Academy basketball has offered two career paths for a coach. There's a hoops protection program, allowing the man on the bench to disappear slowly into anonymity. Or a shrewd winner can trade a rare postseason bid for a quick, one-way ticket out of town.

Best start

So the shocker is the Falcons have fashione the best start in school history, winning 12 of 13 games, and Bzdelik doesn't appear to be going anywhere.

While perspective might have softened the coach's heart, it didn't turn his competitive streak to apple sauce.

The Falcons won again Saturday. They beat Indiana-Purdue. The score?

Try to measure Bzdelik's smile by numbers on a scoreboard, and you're missing the point. *New York Times News Service*

Yao, Shaq lead all-star balloting

NEW YORK—YAO MING OF THE HOUSTON Rockets and Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers lead the Western Conference, while Shaquille O'Neal of the Miami Heat and LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers lead the Eastern Conference in votes received after the second returns of the 2006 NBA All-Star balloting program.

Through the 2006 NBA All-Star balloting program, NBA fans from around the globe are responsible for voting in the starters for the 55th NBA All-Star Games, which will be played in Houston on Feb. 19. The game will be broadcast live on TNT, Rogers Sportsnet, ESPN Radio and audio in several languages on NBA.com.

Yao leads all players with 1,319,868 votes. Teammate Tracy McGrady leads all Western Conference forwards with 1,066,013 votes, followed by Minnesota Timberwolves' Kevin Garnett (793,078). Bryant (1,213,387) and the Phoenix Suns' Steve Nash (981,623), the 2004-05 NBA Most Valuable Player, lead all Western Conference guards.

O'Neal leads all Eastern Conference players with 1,188,830 votes, followed by James (1,150,920). The Indiana Pacers' Jermaine O'Neal (689,526) is second to James among Eastern Conference forwards. The MVP of the 2005 NBA All-Star Game, Allen Iverson of the Philadelphia 76ers, leads all Eastern Conference guards (1,144,250), followed by the Heat's Dwyane Wade (827,913).

This year's All-Star Balloting partners include T-Mobile, AOL, NBA 2K6, Xbox and retailers GameStop & Electronics Boutique.



Badminton takes roller-coaster ride in 2005

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE BEST AND WORST FOR PHILIPPINE badminton in 2005.

After its unprecedented surge in popularity, the sport sank to the depths late this year following a miserable stint in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games where the country only won a total of just one match.

The monumental debacle seemed to put a damper on the sport's boom, resulting in a lot more vacant courts in badminton centers, where not too long ago people would have to queue up just to make reservations.

The result, although more or less expected considering the world-class status of the SEAG field, also hastened the departure of national head coach Martin Araneta.

But in fairness to Araneta, he not only took on a job nobody wanted but, when he came on board, it was practically impossible to form a competitive team with just a few months left before the Games.

Araneta, who from the start said he would stay only for the duration of the

SEA Games, said it's up to the Philippine Badminton Association to choose a new coach.

He said the SEA Games "just confirmed that we are slowly drifting back[wards]" not only behind the traditional superpowers but even behind fast-rising Vietnam.

"You see, it's not surprising to see Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand ruling badminton in the SEAG, but what's shocking is that even Vietnam played better than us," said Araneta.

"We practically crammed to form a team—we need two years at the minimum to prepare ourselves," added Araneta. "In fact there should be a map drawn 4 to 12 years down the road if we are really serious in our pursuit for excellence."

His thoughts were shared by former national training director Errol Chan who called on drastic changes not only in the composition of the team but also in the makeup of the PBA structure presently headed by former First Lady Ming Ramos and former NCRPO chief Edgardo Aglipay.

the sports and grounds committee of the BCC, scored an impressive 68 to capture the overall low gross crown.

Rep. Domogan used his familiarity of BCC's short but challenging par-61 course to grab the Class A title with his net 64.

"As usual, the Nanoy Cup was a huge success," said BCC general manager Anthony de Leon.



KENNEVIC Asuncion fails to save the country's SEAG bid. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Chan said there should be definite guidelines to be followed to prevent controversies brought about by "intervention of the parents of the players and even the godparents of the sport itself."

But Chan is confident the SEAG debacle won't leave a permanent damage to the health of badminton, stating that the sport's popularity is based on the fact

that the masses can easily play the sport and not on spectator appeal like in the case of boxing and basketball.

"Badminton will continue to feed on the grassroots as it doubles up as a form of physical fitness," he said.

And there lies the hope that from the grassroots will spring a stronger national team.

Lawrence, Domogan bag Ilusorio Cup trophies

BAGUIO CITY—BILL LAWRENCE AND Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan went home with perfect New Year presents on Friday as they bagged the two coveted trophies of the sixth Nanoy Ilusorio Cup at the Baguio Country Club (BCC).

The ever-smiling Lawrence, the American who considers this cool and windy city as his second home and also a member of

the sports and grounds committee of the BCC, scored an impressive 68 to capture the overall low gross crown.

Rep. Domogan used his familiarity of BCC's short but challenging par-61 course to grab the Class A title with his net 64.

"As usual, the Nanoy Cup was a huge success," said BCC general manager Anthony de Leon.

that a big Pacquiao win in Las Vegas on Jan. 21 could tell on the rate of the peso against the US dollar.

The fight has soared, burned bright to be that grand.

Of course, there's hometown gladness now that Pacquiao has refused to again adopt his previous stance when he claimed he would just run over Morales, whom Pacman thought would be there for the picking.

Out in the corner sari-sari (variety) store, a crop-headed boxing diehard assured that Pacquiao should be able to beat and stop Morales either in seven or eight rounds.

Morales is good, sharp, he said, but they will now be using thinner fight gloves, unlike last March.

Mind you, this young man is not alone as he gathers all his fanatic energies preparing for the screaming victory dance.

Countless other Pacquiao fans follow the same line of thinking.

That's a lot of nonsense.

Wilson Sports, Dunlop Slazenger Group, Prudential Guarantee, Eco-Green, Werdenberg International, San Miguel Corp., RizGolf, BPI, Philam-Life, Euro-Swiss, Barrington Carpets and Will Dacna and associates were the sponsors.

Other who made the grade in the different classes were Chang Soo Kang (Class B), Ramon Jacinto (Class C), and

Alex Flores (Class D), Nanette Filler (Ladies A), Liza Rondez (Ladies B), and Donna Navarrete (Ladies C).

Bong Mandap (Class A), Frank Ratcliffe (Class B), and Dirk Smit (Class C) won in the seniors division. Basti Filler and Luigi Rmairez placed 1-2 in the dependents division while Willie Hernandez was the guest winner.

Pinoy

in the Asian Games but in the Olympics as well.

But the guessing game continues on by there's relative quiet now for the usually noisy Pinoy, not only during the holidays, but also in the case of Pacquiao who appears to be training in clusion.

Are we finally learning that loudness, oated self-importance, the assorted "a-ek-ek," bragging and screaming aims of superiority are all empty roads to victory?

The greatest thing our underdog athletes had kept with them, as they ventured into the last SEA Games, was a quiet heroic heart, strong and determined.

Another question: Is the Pinoy saving its noisiest, its loudest scream for the Pacquiao fight, when there certainly would be dancing in the streets in the event of victory?

It's not exactly cock-eyed to surmise

that a big Pacquiao win in Las Vegas on Jan. 21 could tell on the rate of the peso against the US dollar.

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Morales is good, sharp,

JOSHUA WEBB

Bench warmer comes to the fore

By Jasmine W. Payo

HE COMES FROM A FAMILY SUPPOSEDLY BLESSED WITH "BAS-
ketball genes."

But save for his family and friends' support, Joshua David Spider Webb admits he isn't drawing much raves for his game.

"I was a bench warmer," said Webb, the sophomore center of the La Salle Zobel Junior Archers. "During my freshman year, I couldn't do much. But I really wanted to help the team, so I promised myself that I would really step up. I wanted to improve myself, to show that I do belong in this team."



Indeed, there have been a lot of changes for the 15-year-old cager.

Webb, grandson of former RP team mainstay, pro pioneer and ex-senator Freddie Webb, got his big break when he filled in for the team's injured starting center late last year.

And 2005 turned out to be Webb's breakthrough season. He powered the Junior Archers to their first UAAP junior basketball championship three months ago, averaging a series-best 19 points and 10.5 rebounds.

"His numbers just kept getting up," said coach Boris Aldeguer of his promising ward. "It was a big surprise. Although I saw it coming because that guy's a workaholic."

Still, Webb didn't expect all the attention following the Junior Archers' historic win.

"In school, people actually came up to me to sign their jerseys," he said. "Before, I was just nothing. They just knew me as the guy who plays basketball."

Webb, along with top junior point guard Simon Atkins, led La Salle in sweeping the University of the



AFTER carrying his school to the championship, Joshua Webb no longer rides the La Salle bench.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Philippines Junior Maroons during the Finals—73-49 in Game 1 and 86-62 in Game 2. It was the school's first title since joining the league in 1986.

"Out of all the teams in Zobel, we're the special team that brought home the crown," said Atkins. "It was a great honor. It was really cool."

"You know the saying that if you work hard for something, you'll get it?" asked Webb. "I realized that it's so true."

Webb was also glad that he made his family proud, especially his grandfather Freddie and dad Fritz.

"My lolo (grand dad) always said that I should always be humble," he said, recalling how the older Webb inspired him to work on his game.

"I started in Grade 5, but I was just shooting," said the young Webb. "I joined the varsity for kicks. I had no knowledge about basketball. But when my lolo heard about it, he started getting me into it."

And it seems that his father has always envisioned him to star on the hardcourt.

"I named him Spider Webb because I thought it would be a cool jock name," laughed Fritz.

But clearly, Webb has shown the potential to live up to the flashy name.

"He's very young," noted Aldeguer. "There's no reason why he can't improve. He's one guy who doesn't give up. You should wait until he's in fourth year. By then, he must be dunking left and right."

POC chief guest of honor in PSA Awards Night

THE HIGHEST RANKING OFFICIAL credited for the successful staging of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games will be the guest of honor and speaker when the PSA (Philippine Sportswriters Association) fêtes the country's biggest sports achievers in 2005 on Jan. 14 the Manila Pavilion.

For the second straight year, Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco will serve as main speaker during the gala rites honoring all those who did their share in making the sporting year a memorable one.

"The sportswriters are honored to have Mr. Cojuangco as guest of honor," said PSA president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya. "I'm sure he would like to spend the evening with the athletes who did us proud in the SEA Games and other international competitions."

Philsoh head

Cojuangco also headed the Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoh), the group that handled the staging of the last SEA Games.

And despite limited funding, the Philsoh managed to hold the Games successfully. The biennial meet saw the emergence of Team Philippines as the new sports power in the region.

Team Philippines captured the overall title for the first time since joining the meet in 1977 by winning 113 gold medals, a historic achievement that easily earned for it the PSA Athlete of the Year Award.

According to Cantor, Cojuangco will also assist diver Sheila Mae Perez and a few other athletes in accepting the well-crafted trophy during the award rites sponsored by Red Bull and supported by San Miguel Corp., Philippine Sports Commission and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Twenty-two athletes, most of them multiple SEA Games gold medal winners, will be recipients of major awards from the country's oldest media group made up of sportswriters from the national newspapers.

Other achievers

Sharing the spotlight with them will be the rest of Filipino SEA Games gold medalists and other athletes who shone in their respective sports, among them pro boxer Manny Pacquiao and golfer Jennifer Rosales.

San Miguel Corp., which donated P100 million to the FG



COJUANGCO: SEAG main man

Foundation as part of the athletes' training expenses for the SEA Games, leads the list of entities and individuals who will be given citations during the two-hour rites to be telecast on a delayed basis by NBN Channel 4.

To the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation goes the honor of being named the most outstanding association.

Filipino rowers swept the six gold medals staked in the traditional boat race in the SEA Games.

The list of awardees:

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR—Team Philippines

MAJOR AWARDEES—Alex Pagulayan (billiards), Manny Pacquiao (pro boxing), Arwind Santos (amateur basketball), Eric Menk (pro basketball), Jennifer Rosales (women's golf), Juvic Pagunsan (amateur golf), Harry Tañamor (amateur boxing), Maristela Torres (athletics), Amaya Paz (archery), Miguel Molina (swimming), Sheila Mae Perez (diving), Benjamin Tolentino (rowing), John Baylon (judo), Cecil Mamilt (tennis), Suhon Hakim, (traditional boat racing), Rupert Abiljon (TBR), Manuel Maya (TBR), Junray Dayurnad (TBR), Ricky Sardena (TBR), Rene Catalan (wushu), Sander Severino (chess, paralympics) and Warren Davadilla (pro cycling)

SPECIAL CITATIONS—All Filipino gold medalists in the 23rd SEA Games

CITATIONS—San Miguel Corp., First Gentleman Foundation, grandmaster Mark Paragua, golfer Jayvee Agojo, Manila Sports Council, JVC (Victor Company of Japan), boxer Brian Viloria, former POC President Celso Dayrit, PSC Chair Butch Ramirez, Asian Formula 3, V-League, boxer Boom Boom Bautista, practical shooter Jag Lejano, Eddie Torres, Erlina Pecante, the Philippine Practical Shooting team and equestrienne Toni Leviste.

ANTONIO M. SIDDAYAO

AWARD—Wolen Superal, Miguel Tabuena

MOST OUTSTANDING NSA—Philippine Dragon Boat Federation

SPECIAL AWARD—Philippine Paralympics team, Joseph Dumuk

Top riders vie for Hari ng Bisikleta tour slots

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST BIKATHON RIDERS take to the road again on Wednesday and Sunday in Nasugbu, Batangas, to vie for the 72 slots up for grabs in the elimination race of this year's Hari ng Bisikleta 2006 Cycling Tour.

A cash pot of P10 million, including the lion's share of P1 million for the bikathon's individual champion, will be disputed by the

qualifiers who will be formed into 12 teams.

The team that wins the multi-stage Tour gets P1.5 million.

Officials of the Cycling Organizers Association of the Philippines (Coap) said registration for the elimination races is ongoing.

Coap president Julie Nuguid said no more than 200 cyclists will be allowed to compete in the qualifying races. He advised prospect-

tive participants to register early.

The first of the two-stage eliminations on Wednesday is a massed-start circuit race in Nasugbu. The second stage on Sunday will be an individual time trial along a hilly, winding route from Nasugbu to Tagaytay City.

For inquiries on the elimination races, call the Coap headquarters at 749-90-57 or 731-57-63.

Lopez to the rescue

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo



Sachs scored 42 points in the gold medal game against Britain at the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta, setting a new Paralympic and Olympic record.

This meet for athletes with a disability—mostly paraplegic ex-servicemen—was launched in 1948 in London by Sir Ludwig Guttmann, the Father of the Paralympics; and a British neurosurgeon at Stoke-Mandeville Hospital in Aylesbury, Britain. Held to coincide with the 1948 London Olympic Games, it was initially called the International Wheelchair Games.

The Paralympic Games are governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), a counterpart to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Since the Rome Olympic Games in 1960, the Paralympics has grown dramatically.

In the 1964 Tokyo Games, several new Paralympic sports were introduced, including the 60-meter dash, wheelchair slalom, weightlifting and discus throw. In the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, Heidelberg included blind German athletes to compete in several events, setting the stage for their inclusion, while in 1976, amputees and vision-impaired athletes were allowed to join the games in Toronto.

In 1980 in Arnhem, the Netherlands, athletes with cerebral palsy competed for the first time. It was also the year, Sir Ludwig Guttmann died. Barcelona, host city for the 1992 Olympic Games, introduced the first television coverage of the Paralympics, attracting over 1.3 million viewers.

In the United States, where the Paralympic movement is not very popular, organizers of the 1996 Atlanta Games, invited the late actor Christopher Reeve of Superman fame to grace the event. Reeve, who was paralyzed in a horseback riding incident in 1995, had served as an inspiration to millions of persons with disabilities.



CEREMONIAL TOSS: Silay City Mayor Carlo V. Gambar makes the ceremonial toss in the recent Small Basketeers Philippines and Passerelle National Finals organized by the BEST Center and sponsored by Milo last month in Silay City. Looking on are (from left) BEST Center founder Nic Jorge, Philippine Basketball Federation Region IV director Rudy Azcona, Milo Sports executive Pat Goc Ong and Bacolod tourney organizer Joanne Soto Solon. BEST Center is Asia's first scientific school of basketball.

PBA matches . . .

From page A17

ence rose from 3.4 percent to 4.2 percent over the same stretch in the same conference last season, with games featuring crowd-drawer Barangay Ginebra giving the ratings a big boost.

Purefoods Chunkee Giants' quality games and the San Miguel Beermen's astounding climb from the cellar off a five-game win streak also contributed to ABC-5's success in the ratings game.

The matchup between Ginebra's Marc Caguioa and rookie Alex Cabagnot of Sta. Lucia Realty was one of the most watched in the conference.

Other interesting highlights of the survey:

- The current conference is watched by more male audience, a jump of 32 percent, while female share also rose to 23 percent compared to last year's figures during the Gran Matador Cup.

- The 16-24 age bracket recorded the biggest audience growth, logging a 46 percent uptake.

- Next to the 16-24 year bracket, the "below 16-year-old" group recorded a growth of 33 percent.

- Sunday games generally delivered better weekend viewership for all teams compared to Saturday.

I HAVE NOT SEEN MANILA REP JAIME Lopez in ages, but I was elated to know that he is spearheading a move in Congress to help alleviate the plight of the differently-abled athletes, most of whom have been virtually neglected by supposedly well-meaning sports leaders, including organizers of the just-ended 3rd Asean Para Games.

In the last Para Games, for example, several gold medal winners, like veteran internationalist Adeline Dumapong and Isidro Vidosola, complained that they were not given basic necessities like competition shoes, bags, equipment and a complete set of uniforms.

"I even had to borrow a pair of shoes from a friend," said Minnie Ramos, two-gold medalist in table tennis.

According to my sources, Rep. Lopez, brother of former Philippine Sports Commission chair and Manila mayor Mel Lopez, is keen on helping these athletes with disabilities who won medals in the Paralympics and Asean Games by proposing a bill that will give them lifetime benefits and cash incentives similar to Republic Act 9064.

RA 9064 is the one and only law which provides cash rewards and other incentives for medal winners in the Olympics, Asian Games and Southeast Asian Games. But it does not go far enough because it does not reward achievers in the Paralympics and champions of non-Olympic sports like bowling's four-time World Cup winner Paeng Nepomuceno, billiards icons Efren "Bata" Reyes and Alex Pagulayan, lady golfers Dorothy Delasin and Jennifer Rosales and chess legend Eugene Torre and latest sensation Mark Paragua.

It's about time we rewarded the medal winners of the Paralympics for the sake of equity and fairness. As Philippine Sportswriters Association president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya said, "It is only fitting that we recognize the honor which our different-

Other world and Olympic records set by the Paralympians are comparable with those of able-bodied athletes.

For example, the Paralympic time of 10.72 seconds in the men's 100 meters recorded by Nigerian amputee Ajibola Adoye is not far behind the Olympic clocking of 9.84 seconds established by Canadian sprinter Donovan Bailey. American vision-impaired swimmer, Tricia Zorn, also came within one, one-hundredth of a second of qualifying for the United States Olympic team while some Paralympic powerlifters have benchpressed over 600 lbs.

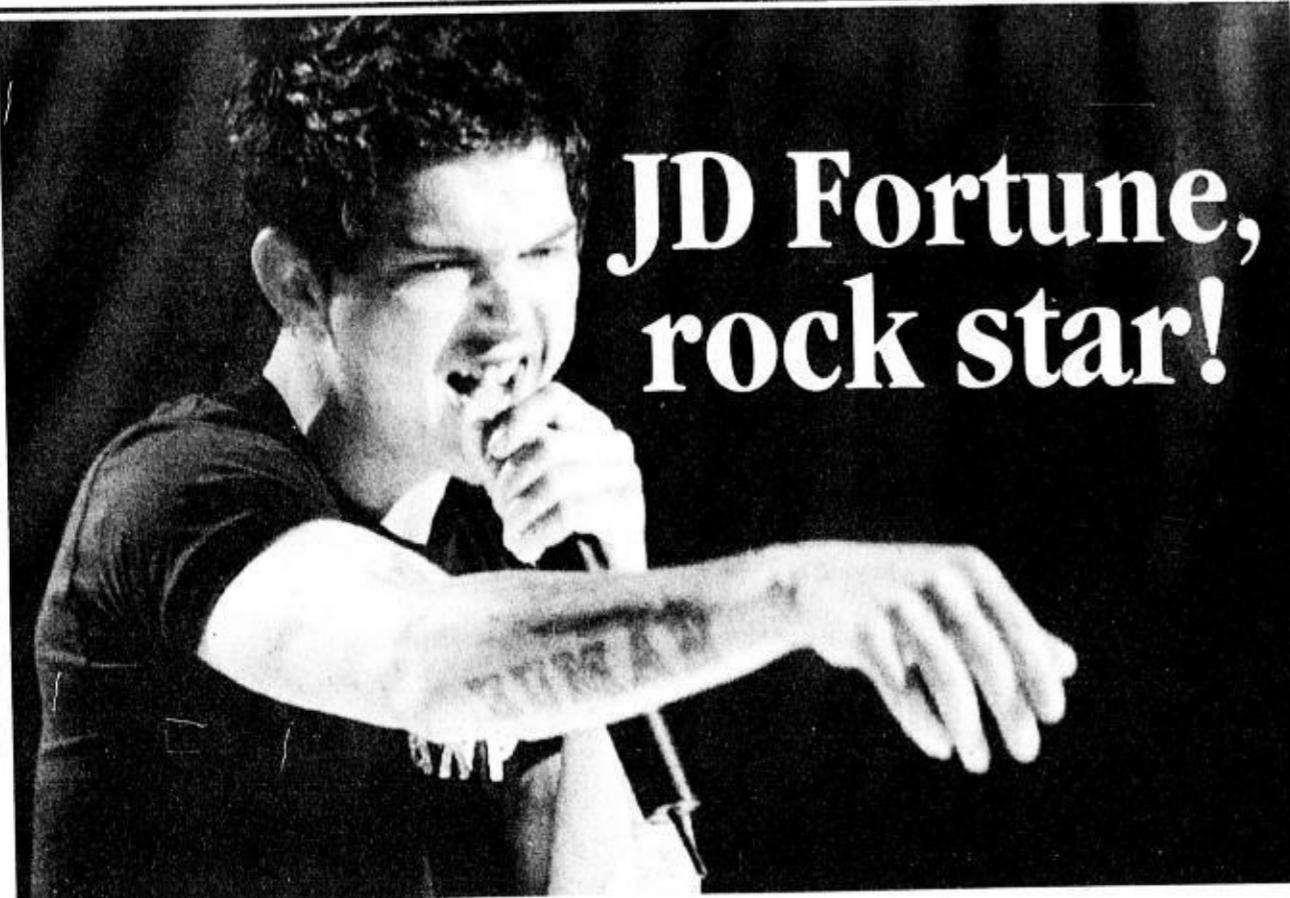
In basketball, Australian player Troy

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2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

JD Fortune,
rock star!

By Fran Katigbak

INQUIRER
EXCLUSIVE

INXS' new front man prepares for Manila visit by learning to speak in Filipino

M AH-GUN-DHANG UH-mahga," JD Fortune greeted us—much to our amusement—in an attempt to speak in Filipino.

The Canadian, who beat an impressive lineup of rockers in the reality TV show "Rock Star: INXS" to become the Aussie band's new front man, began learning the language while prepping himself for the INXS world tour.

The 11-week search ended in September. The tour starts Jan. 18.

JD said Philippine fans can expect the band here in late August or

early September.

Currently staying in Sydney, Australia, JD spent the holidays away from his mom and siblings. But he was warmly welcomed into the families of his band mates.

In an exclusive phone interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, the 32-year-old musician talked about quitting smoking, motorbiking with Tim Farriss, and getting mobbed

JD FORTUNE/A2-3



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this New Year**

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FOXTROT

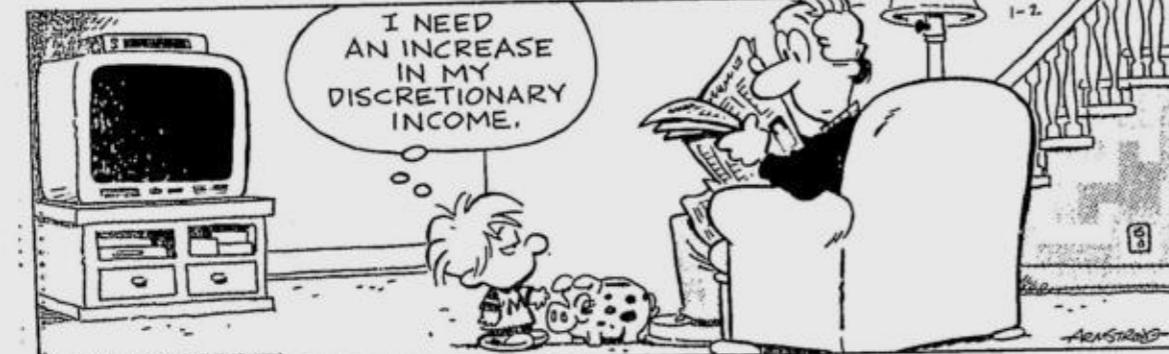


BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN



BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

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BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBBOY



BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a fine mind. You appreciate a variety of subjects. You're very dedicated to whatever is important to you. You work well with others, but you set high standards for yourself. You remain youthful well into old age. The year ahead might be one of the best years of your life. Open any door!

Birthday of: Taye Diggs, actor; Kate Bosworth, actress; Cuba Gooding Jr., actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's easy to work with others today. You enjoy group activities. In particular, you appreciate female friends and acquaintances.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You love novelty, and you hate to be bored. Try to do something different and out of the ordinary today. Go someplace you have never been before.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): For some reason, people notice you today. You will almost certainly be briefly in the limelight. Discussions with parents and bosses are significant.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Talk to others about how something should be fairly shared. You might help others see eye to eye about something. (You are the glue that is needed in this situation.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You will likely be involved with friends and partners today. (The Moon is opposite your sign.) Someone wants to tell you exactly where he or she stands on an issue. Listen carefully.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Make an effort to get better organized today. Clean out your car, your purse or under the sink. Tackle little areas that you often ignore. You'll feel good about whatever you accomplish.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a lovely day to enjoy the arts or schmooze with friends. It's also a flirtatious, romantic day. Make sure you have some fun!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Focus your attention on home, family and your domestic environment. Shop for food. Talk to family members. Get rid of garbage, unnecessary boxes and things you don't need.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You'll enjoy the company of others today. You feel social and friendly. Share your ideas about what you want this year to bring.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you go shopping today, it's a good time to get things for home and family. It's also good day for food shopping. You're keen to make things more homey where you live.

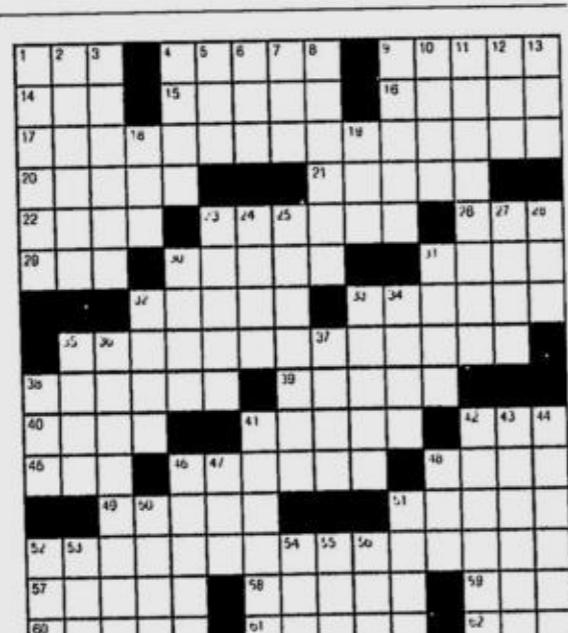
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You feel a bit more emotional than usual, and that's because the Moon is in your sign today. It's nothing you can't handle. In fact, it magnetizes extra good luck to you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Seek out some solitude today. You need some private thinking time to sort something out. You'll work better behind the scenes or by yourself.

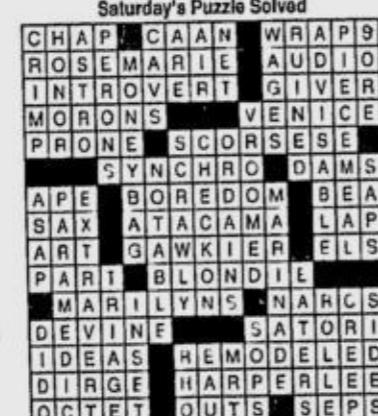
DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- That proves it!
- Adjudicate
- Housing unit
- One of a D.C. hundred
- Customary
- Xenophobe's dread
- Hop
- Underway
- Annoy
- Thaw
- Thoroughfare
- Cut down
- Time to remember
- Fencing tools
- Tropical nut
- Bridle attachments
- Stirred up
- Skip
- Chevron's 2001 merger partner
- Devoured
- Soaks
- Hatfield's foe
- Ruin
- Poetic form
- Hang around
- Round number?
- Something to Talk About
- singer Bonnie
- Add a lane to, say
- Jump
- Portehouse alternative
- Modern post
- Remodeled Clay?
- Seductress
- Bonaduce of The Partridge Family
- Boy, am I dumb!
- Fed budget group

By Barry Slik
McLean, VA

Saturday's Puzzle Solved



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DOWN

- Sad news
- Young cow
- Luanda's land
- Equal
- Trojans sch.
- Boy, am I dumb!
- Fed budget group
- Turbine part
- Abide by
- Marsh growth
- Outer surface
- Strong, fast current
- Tango team
- Like British bishops
- Road divider
- Cactus surface pit
- Van Zant of Lynyrd Skynyrd
- Compare
- Ex-Giant Mel
- Pimple
- Complexion blemish
- Skilfully deceptive
- 52 Parts of gals.
- Where: Lat.
- Health grp.
- Tandoor-baked bread
- Something to confess



BEN



BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE



BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS



BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

TULDOK



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SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	AKO, LEGAL WIFE 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
MULAWIN 11:30 / 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	BLUE MOON
ENTENG KABISOTE 2 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	MOURNING GIRLS
KUTOB 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

ALI MALL CINEMAS

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2 11:45 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25	2 MOURNING GIRLS 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00
2 MULAWIN 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05	3 AKO LEGAL WIFE 11:20 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
3 BLUE MOON 12:15 / 4:45 / 1:30 / 3:45 / 6:00	4 DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1 DD5.1

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JD Fortune, rock star!

From page A2-3

man] Michael Hutchence?

I think it's just rock n' roll and sexual energy. I've been really working on getting the TV show ("Rock Star: INXS") out of my body and getting back into just being a rock n' roll musician.

How does it feel to complete an album with INXS?

It was like trying to think of the name of an actor in some movie, or the name of something, and you can't remember. Then, just before you go to bed you go, "Aah, that's what it is," and you get a sense of relief. The experience was so fulfilling and so warm that we actually want to do another one very soon.

You're now really part of the INXS family, aren't you?

Oh, yes. I was [supposed] to go to the movies today with Kirk [Pengilly] and his daughter. I'm going up to Tim's farm tomorrow. He's got motorbikes that we would ride around in the sun and do some jumping and stuff like that.

Describe what a regular day is like for you.

I get up at about 5:30 or 6 a.m. before it gets too hot, run for about 45 minutes and then come back, have a really nice breakfast, then do a little bit of meditation just to focus myself for the day. I usually end up calling up one of the guys and see what they're up to.

In the last couple of days, I've quit smoking. I hear the hardest is the first three or four days. I'm just trying to breathe and drink lots of water and get all nasty toxins out of my system so I can be really healthy for the tour.

Are you more relaxed and comfortable with your schedule?

I have no choice but to be relaxed because the schedule is really, really heavy. We're (INXS) touring for 18 months. We [even] need to shoot two more videos.

How many shows are you doing in Asia?

I think we're doing about 15 shows.

MiG Ayesa was recently in Manila and fulfilled his promise to kiss, hug and please his fans. What can Filipinos expect from you?

I promise that I will learn to say the most beautiful greetings and be able to carry on a good conversation [in Filipino]. I'm just learning to speak [the language] right now. I think it's a beautiful language. I was on the Internet [looking it up] and oh, my God, it's so beautiful!

M M T A

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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1 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE 2 GP	1 (08) EXODUS	1 (08) AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 (08) MULAWIN THE MOVIE GP	2 (08) MULAWIN	2 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 (08) AKO LEGAL WIFE P13	3 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE -2	3 (08) EXODUS
4 (08) BLUEMOON GP	4 (08) MOURNING GIRL	4 (08) KUTOB
	5 (08) LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO	
	6 (08) KUTOB	
	7 (08) BLUE MOON	
	8 (08) SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL	
	9 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE -2	
	10 (08) AKO LEGAL WIFE	
CINEMA 2000 Movie Theatres of the New Millennium		
Blue Wave Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927		
1 (08) MULAWIN		
2 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
3 (08) EXODUS		
4 (08) SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL		
Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Birman) tel. (049) 4111146		
1 (08) SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL		
2 (08) EXODUS		
3 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
4 (08) MULAWIN		
Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.6771		
1 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
2 (08) MULAWIN		
3 (08) EXODUS		
4 (08) KUTOB		
Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729		
1 (08) SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL		
2 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
3 (08) MULAWIN		
4 (08) EXODUS		
Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320		
1 (08) EXODUS		
2 (08) MULAWIN		
3 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
4 (08) KUTOB		
Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan)		
1 (08) EXODUS		
2 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
3 (08) MULAWIN		
4 (08) KUTOB		
Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748		
1 (08) SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL		
2 (08) EXODUS		
3 (08) Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 650.1276		
1 (08) BLUE MOON		
2 (08) MULAWIN		
3 (08) LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO		
4 (08) EXODUS		
Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202		
1 (08) EXODUS		
2 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
3 (08) MULAWIN		
4 (08) SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL		
5 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.7209		
1 (08) SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL		
2 (08) ENTENG KABISOTE		
3 (08) MULAWIN		
4 (08) EXODUS		
Berma Cinema (Bacoor) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029		
1 (08) BLUE MOON		
2 (08) MOURNING GIRLS		

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GALLERIA

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE • THX	6 MULAWIN
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 EXODUS	7 TERRORIST HUNTER
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 ENTENG KABISOTE	8 EXODUS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30
4 KUTOB	9 ENTENG KABISOTE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	10:15 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00
5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	10 MULAWIN
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30

HERMITA

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
2 ENTENG KABISOTE	5 KUTOB
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 MULAWIN	6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00	10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00
4 TERRORIST HUNTER	7 EXODUS
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

METRO EAST

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05	10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05
2 EXODUS	6 TERRORIST HUNTER
2:15 4:35 6:55 9:15	2:15 4:35 6:55 9:15
3 ENTENG KABISOTE	7 KUTOB
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20	12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20
4 MULAWIN	8 EXODUS
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00	11:25 1:45 4:05 6:25 8:45

NOVALICHES

1 EXODUS	5 MULAWIN
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	6 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 KUTOB	7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 TERRORIST HUNTER	8 ENTENG KABISOTE

CITISQUARE MALABON

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 EXODUS	2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 RESERVE	3 EXODUS
4 RESERVE	4 MULAWIN

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STA. ROSA

1 KING KONG	1 KING KONG
2 ENTENG KABISOTE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MULAWIN	3 MULAWIN
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE	4 MULAWIN
5 EXODUS	5 EXODUS

DASMARINAS

1 MULAWIN	1 KING KONG
2 TERRORIST HUNTER	2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 KUTOB	3 MULAWIN
4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	4 MULAWIN
5 EXODUS	5 EXODUS

IMUS

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE	2 TERRORIST HUNTER
3 MULAWIN	3 KUTOB
4 TERRORIST HUNTER	4 EXODUS
5 KUTOB	5 ENTENG KABISOTE
6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	6 MULAWIN

BACOLOD

1 KING KONG	1 KUTOB
2 EXODUS	2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 MULAWIN	3 EXODUS
4 ENTENG KABISOTE	4 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE	5 ENTENG KABISOTE
6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	6 MULAWIN

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G1 GLORIETTA	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	4 EXODUS
G4 GLORIETTA	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 MULAWIN GUARANTEED SEATS	4 EXODUS
GB1 GREENBELT	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2		
GB3 GREENBELT	1 MULAWIN GUARANTEED SEATS	2 TERRORIST HUNTER GUARANTEED SEATS	3 EXODUS GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 MULAWIN	2 TERRORIST HUNTER		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 KUTOB	2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	3 MULAWIN	4 EXODUS

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② KUTOB
③ MULAWIN
④ ENTENG KABISOTE 2
⑤ AKO LEGAL WIFE

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Film Critic/Columnist
People's Journal/
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PER DTI LAGUNA PERMIT NO. S-12-435 SERIES OF 2005

THIS EARLY, FILM PEOPLE ARE SECOND-guessing the box-office results of the ongoing Metro Manila Film Festival. Since it's shaped up as a principally fantasy film fest, the bets are generally being placed on "Exodus," "Mulawin" and "Enteng Kabisote 2."

"Exodus" scores popularity points because it's visually impressive, having invested many millions of pesos in its striking and imaginative special effects.

For its part, "Mulawin" expects fans of its original TV series to want to see the big-screen version. Also, the film combines the "Mulawin" and "Encantadia" series, so its viewer appeal could double.

Finally, "Enteng 2" banks on the original movie's supremacy at the box office some film-fests ago. The people behind the production hope that many of its original film's millions of viewers will also want to patronize this sequel. It was the festival's opening-day top grosser?

So, who could emerge as the box-office champ in the end? Taking all factors into consideration, it's a toss-up between "Exodus" and "Mulawin."

"Mulawin" scores because of its huge potential carry-over audience from television and striking storytelling.

But "Exodus" is definitely a viewable movie in its own right, so we're hoping that film fest viewers patronize it as well, to encourage its producers to come up with similarly big-budget

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre



"ENTENG Kabisote" was first-day winner

geted and well-produced movies in the future.

Another viewable film fest entry we've caught in preview is "Ako Legal Wife." The comedy production provides a welcome alternative viewing option for people who could end up with a surfeit of fantasy productions.

Stalkers strike again

Celebrities love being rich and famous, but there's a down side to fame: stalkers. Jodie Foster, John Lennon, Charlize Theron and George Clooney are only a few of the stars who have suffered from the onslaught of overly obsessive fans who hounded them until it became really scary.

Recently, however, a fan of TV show David Letterman turned the tables on him by accusing the star comedian of stalking her!

She sought court action to inhibit Letterman from hounding her—and she succeeded in securing a temporary injunction to that effect.

Legal experts have rapped the judge for his surprising decision to take the complainant's plea seriously, so it could be struck down soon, to the embarrassed Letterman's great relief.

What is the woman complaining about, exactly? It seems that, when he's on TV, she sees him making "coded" gestures that send "unwelcome" messages to her—!

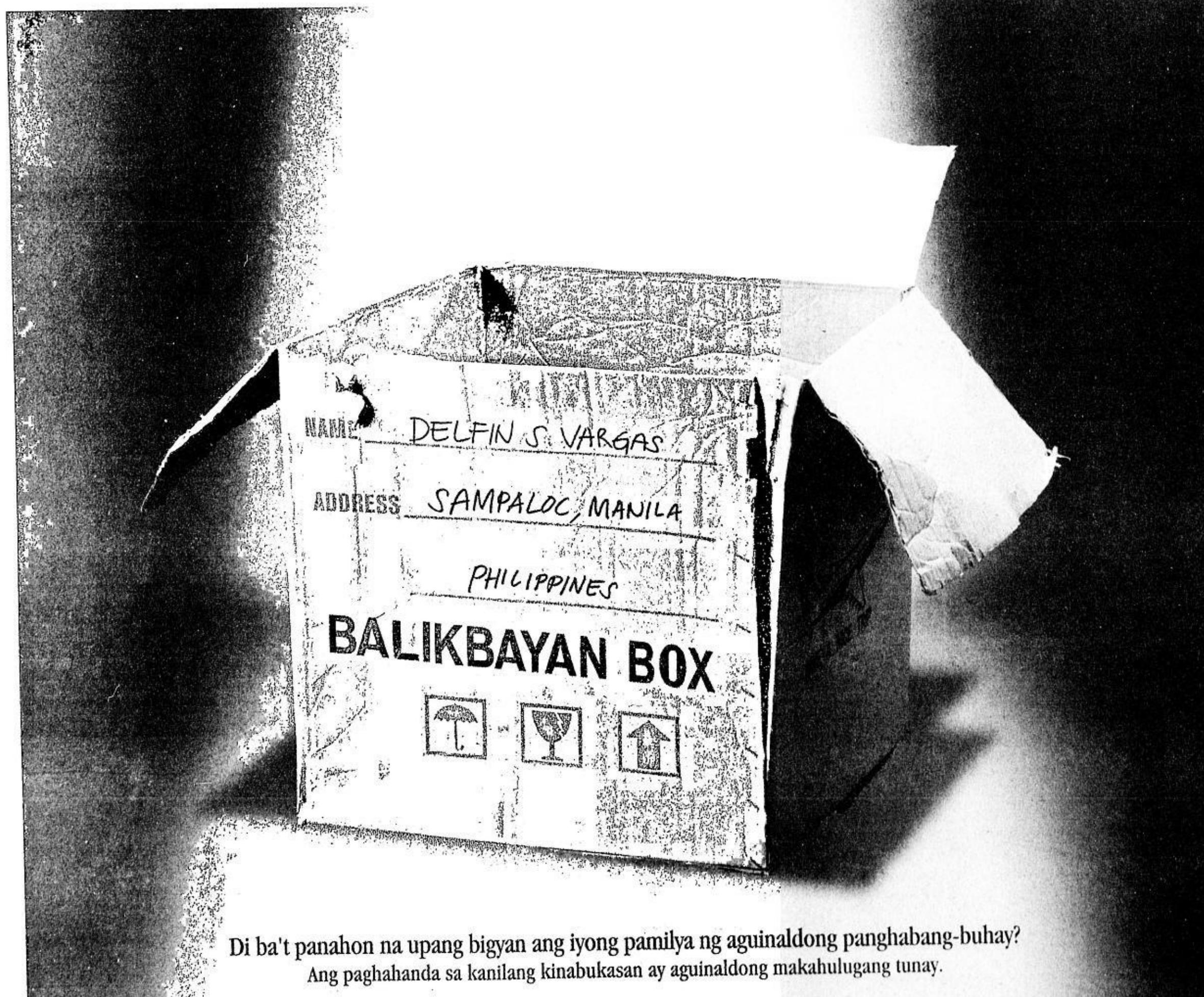
Can she prove his stalking intent when he makes those "stalking" gestures? That sounds pretty far-fetched to us, but Letterman doesn't think the situation is funny—at all.

POWER PLANT		
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MORNING GIRLS R13 Please call for screening schedule	MULAWIN GP 12:20, 2:50, 5:30, 7:50, 10:15	AKO LEGAL WIFE: MANO PO 4 PG13 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
ENTENG KABISOTE: THE LEGEND CONTINUES GP 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	BLUE MOON GP Please call for screening schedule	EXODUS: TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

NOTES: 4/IC SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41



BIG BUDGET pays off for "Exodus," which scores with imaginative special effects.



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Zero duty on special vehicle parts up for Palace approval

Promoting use of alternative transport fuels

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CABINET-LEVEL NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority Board has endorsed to President Macapagal-Arroyo for approval an executive order reducing to zero the tariffs slapped on imported materials and components used for the assembly of vehicles powered by alternative fuels.

The Department of Energy and the Board of Investments, an agency of the trade department, proposed the EO to encourage investors to go into the assembly of vehicles that would use biodiesel, bio-ethanol, compressed natural gas (CNG) and electricity.

The proposed EO brings down to zero both the most favored nation (MFN) and common effective preferential tariff (CEPT) rates on imported components and accessories of hybrid, electric, flex-fuel and CNG vehicles by qualified Motor Vehicle Development Program participants.

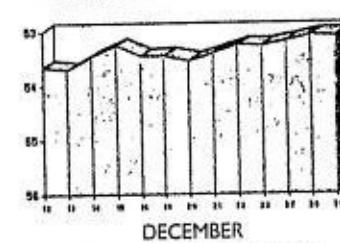
At present, the tariffs on imported motor vehicle parts and components are 3 percent under the MFN and one percent under the CEPT.

The CEPT rate applies to imports coming from Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries, while the MFN rate applies to those coming from non-ASEAN countries.

ZERO DUTY/B3

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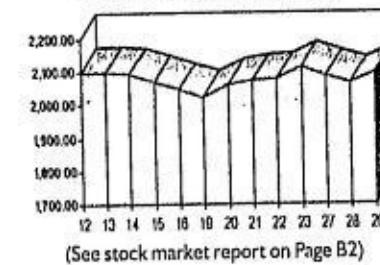
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 30, 2005

GOLD: \$514.00-514.50

per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 30, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks advance 1.4%

STOCKS ENDED 2005 ON AN UPBEAT NOTE, as investors took advantage of the market's recent losses to hunt for bargains, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 28.72 points Thursday, or 1.4 percent, to 2,096.04. The index shed 2.1 percent over the past two trading days, including Wednesday's one percent loss.

The main index was up 15 percent from its 2004 closing level of 1,822.83. There was no trading last Friday, a public holiday. Trading resumes today.

Blue chips dominated trading, led by Bank of the Philippines Islands, which rose 1.9 percent to P54.50, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., up 3.1 percent at P1,835, and Globe Telecom, up 2.1 percent to P735.

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Taipannic bonuses

SAN MIGUEL CORP STILL HANDS OUT THE fattest pay envelopes among the listed companies, despite it being no longer the country's most profitable enterprise.

For the year just past, the country's biggest food and beverage complex was estimated to have paid chair/CEO Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., president Ramon Ang and seven other key officers P231.5 million in salaries, bonuses and allowances, not counting stock options.

That is about P25.7 million each officer, on average, in exchange for the Cojuangco management turning in P8.08 billion in profits in 2004.

Contrast these figures with those of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Corp., which in 2004 churned out an eye-popping P27.97 billion in net income.

In return, PLDT president/CEO Napoleon Nazareno and 30 top officers were estimated to have received P223.7 million, or about P7.45 million on average, in their 2005 pay packets.

Apples to apples, even the executives of the smaller Globe Telecom were better compensated than PLDT's, the industry leader.

Globe president Gerardo Ablaza Jr. and nine other top officers were estimated to have received P106.35 million in 2005 compensation, or about P10.6 million each on average.

Globe's 2004 net income was nearly P1.26 billion, nearly half more than San Miguel's. Among the taipans, the Gokongwei family lived up to their parsimonious reputation, despite their listed holding company now a regional conglomerate.

For 2005, chair/CEO James Go, chair emeritus John Gokongwei Jr. and his son Lance were estimated to have paid themselves and two other top JG Summit executives P42.5 million in all, or about P8.5 million each on average.

In 2004, the Gokongweis cranked out P5.9 billion in net profits out of their food, beverage, airline, petrochemical, textile, hotel, real estate and retail spread.

Surprisingly, the Sys out-Gokongweid the Gokongweis when it comes to paying themselves in the Sy holding company, SM Investments Corp.

Despite SMIC posting P5.35 billion in net income for the fiscal year 2005, the combined pay checks of president Harley Sy and his brothers Hans and Herbert and two others for the same year totaled a thrifty P18,999 million, or about P3.8 million each on average.

Banking spreads

AMONG the banks, the quietly profitable Chinabank surprisingly beat the big boys in executive compensation.

Chair Gilbert Dee, president/CEO Peter Dee and three others were estimated to have received more than P63.3 million, or about P15.8 million each on average, in total 2005 compensation.

On the other hand, the country's biggest bank, Metrobank, was estimated to have compensated its majority owner/chair/CEO George Ty, president Antonio Abacan and two others about P60.08 million, or P15.02 million each on average, in the same year.

The Ayala-controlled Bank of the Philippines Islands, meanwhile, rewarded new president Aurelio Montinola III and four other top suits about P72.13 million, or about P14.4 million each on average.

Hamburger gravy

WHILE hamburger-flipping may be the butt of jokes within the financial press, working for the top of the fastfood chain feels like working for a leading bank or a hot telecom company, remuneration-wise.

Jollibee president/CEO Tony Tan Caktiong and four top officers of the country's biggest restaurant chain were estimated to have received P55.47 million, or P11.09 million each on average, in 2005 compensation.

That pay scale easily eclipses the average package in PLDT or Banco de Oro (average top executive package: P6.96 million) or even the Gokongweis', despite Jollibee reporting P1.58 billion in 2004 profits.

The Jollibee package even noses out the now multinational International Container Terminal Services Inc. of Enrique Razon Jr. Razon and four ICTSI officers were estimated to have received P51.9 million, or P10.38 million each on average, in 2005 compensation, on the back of P1.06 billion 2004 profits.

Heard through the grapevine

REP. Ronaldo Zamora may be the San Juan representative, but it looks like the former Estrada executive secretary is determined to make Ayala Heights in Quezon City his actual residence.

The portly congressman has now doubled his residential footprint after acquiring the neighboring lot in the exclusive subdivision.

(Email: cocktails_pdi@pldtidsl.net or cocktails_pdi@yahoo.com)

Zero duty ...

From page B1

Upon the approval of the EO, the BOI, pursuant to its Motor Vehicle Development Program, will issue the guidelines that will govern the implementation of the preferential tariff privilege.

The BOI's Motor Vehicle Development Program aims to promote the country as the ASEAN region's manufacturing hub for motor vehicles, and motor vehicle parts and components.

The proposed EO will not only make the program more attractive to investors, but will also help promote the use of alternative transport fuels.

Even prior to the drafting of the proposed EO, Ford Motors has already committed to invest \$20 million for the establishment of a factory that will produce flex-fuel vehicles, or those that run on alternative fuels, in the Philippines.

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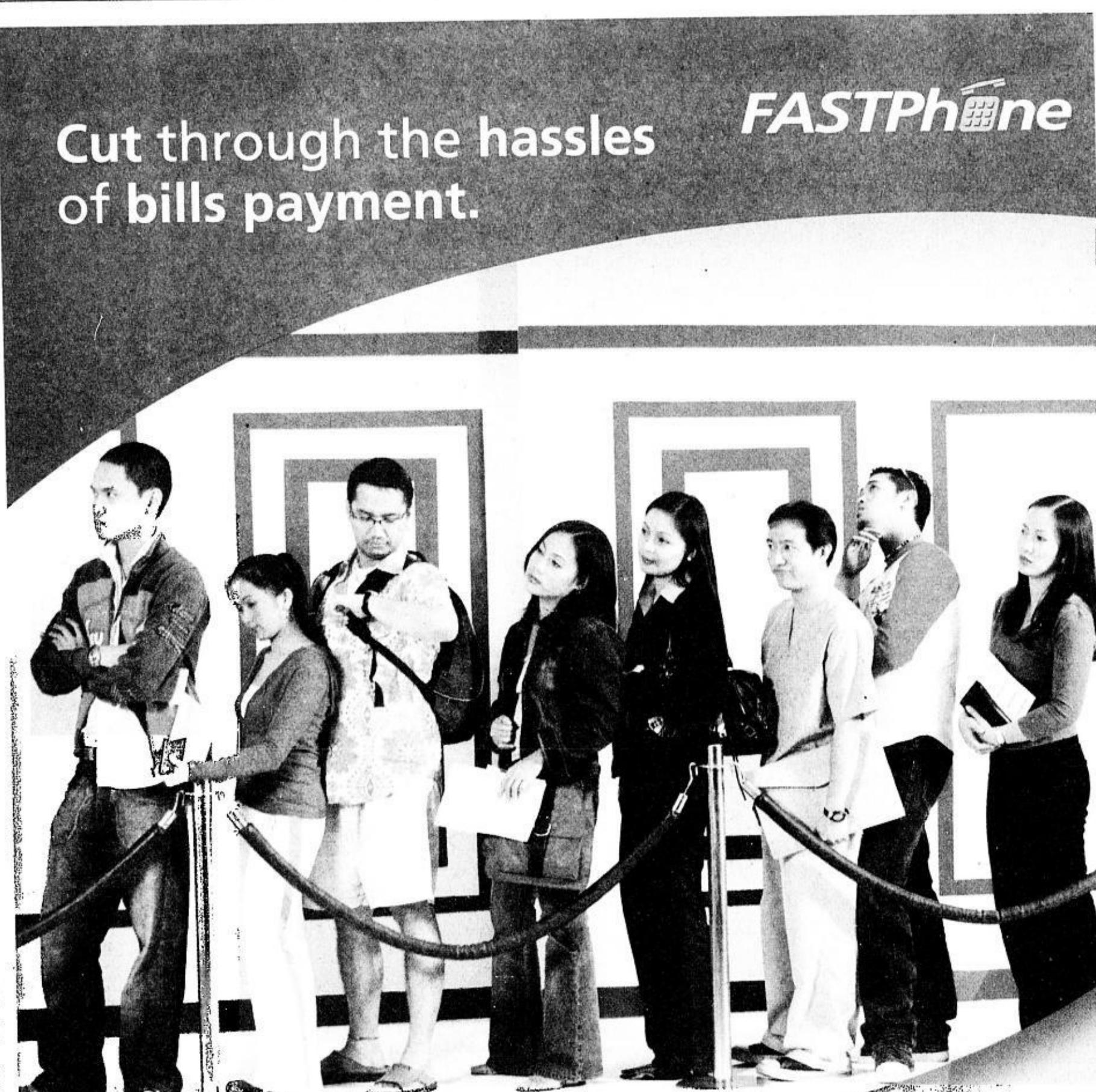
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TUMPALAN

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

EVERY YEAR, THERE ARE economic winners and losers. Industry trends will be known in a few months from now. But firms already know how their businesses fared.

BusinessMonday asked CEOs how their companies performed last year and what they expect this year.

Tessie Sy, president, SM Inc.

Our businesses in retail and shopping centers are doing well, thanks to the efforts of our executives and staff who work hard to meet targets and make shopping more exciting for our customers. If we continue the same efforts—if not enhance these—we would be okay with 2006.

Jose L. Cuisia president, Philamlife

2005 was not a very good year for us. We expect 2006 to be a better year because we expect GDP growth to be higher this year and greater political and economic stability.

Ambassador Francisco Alba, chair, Prudentiallife

2005 was a little bit slow but 2006 should be better.

Doyee Tactacon-Tumpalan, president of First Quadrant

Business was mostly challenging but nevertheless rewarding this 2005. It was a time for aggressive innovation as a means to further strengthen our position in the industry and it was also an opportunity for ingenious product development that once again showcases Filipino ingenuity. Some will say that it was a very trying year but for me, it was a test of resilience that proved how integrity, commitment and sustainability can triumph over any adversity.

Great expectations for 2006



SY



TANTOCO



BELO



GARCIA



ALBA



BERMUDEZ

2006 brings much reason to be optimistic because I foresee breakthrough products, particularly in the nutraceutical market, creating a stronger niche. Hopefully, the Philippine herbal industry will flourish, expand and gain global recognition.

Ramon Lopez, vice president, RFM Corp.

RFM did well in 2005 sustaining the turnaround in 2004, mainly due to re-strategizing and internal cost rationalization. With consumer spending tempered, some food and beverage categories grew single digits only but others declined so, since sales weren't that exciting, we had to do complementing cost restructuring to still achieve bottomline targets.

Joey Bermudez, president, Chinatrust (Phils.) Inc.

Business was significantly better for us in 2005 than 2004, pri-

marily because our new business strategy began taking hold. Our investments are paying off quite reasonably. We expect 2006 to be quite testy given the challenges in the real economy. We do not rule out near-term shocks in the environment.

Dr. Vicki Belo, medical director, Belo Medical Group

Last year was pretty flat. There was an increase in the total number of patients coming to the clinic but they did fewer procedures.

Expectations for next year—we are concentrating on beauty tourism because these patients have higher spending capacity plus they will also bring in dollars which will help the country.

Catherine Y. Tantoco, vice president, Rustan Supercenter Inc. (Shopwise)

January to October was extremely good for us. November was lackluster and December is still wait and see. Next year will be challenging but it has been that way the past two years. Home furnishings, decor and appliances did well versus adult and children's apparel which performed poorly.

Fresh items, baked goods, health and beauty as well as

pharma did well. Chocolates and snacks were down.

Jose Magsaysay, Potato Corner, Quick Stix, Wonder Waffle, China China, George Popcorn and Potatobilities

For the industry I am in—micro food—2005 was a challenging year. I take it as a taste of what to expect in 2006. Only companies who think out of the box and who continue to see how important brand integrity is will score well.

I see many opportunities in 2006 for my industry which will give us 100 percent increase in income. As for the property consultancy and commercial leasing, business in '05 was a banner year as we were blessed with many opportunities here and abroad.

In '06 we see more projects for us outside the Philippines.

Malu de Venecia, marketing and communications director, Cinderella Group

The Cinderella Group is expected to post a marginal growth in 2005 despite the difficult time the local retail industry is presently experiencing. We carefully planned out our strategies for 2005 with our store renovations and right sizing and we also

set realistic targets for our new brands.

Cifashion Specialty Store Inc. (CSSI), part of the Cinderella Group is projected to achieve a 30 percent growth from its performance in 2004 plus additional sales from its new brands—Rampage and Clarks. Key success drivers are the new global business strategy for Esprit, product improvement for U2 and a more focused brand imaging for British India. These brands are the group's current stronghold and source of growth.

For Cinderella stores' performance, on the other hand, we are presently experiencing positive results from our store re-imaging (Cinderella Alabang and Cinderella Megamall). A better and improved business model prioritizing lifestyle categories and not individual brands. The newly opened Cinderella San Lazaro is one of the first Cinderella 'Now' concept catering to the younger generation of Cinderella loyalists. These Cinderella 'Now' stores shall be the venue to highlight our growing private labels and brands.

In 2006, The Cinderella Group projects more than 30 percent growth from 2005's performance. CSSI, the imported divi-

sion of Cinderella group is expected to maintain its momentum especially with the planned construction of an 850-square-meter Esprit flagship store in the early part of the year, new store openings for U2 and British India and Esprit in SM's Mall of Asia. New brands Rampage and Clarks will be in full gear opening each of their fourth and fifth stores in 2006.

Cinderella stores are targeted to improve its performance by 10 percent. Key levers of growth are: The implementation of the new business model of Cinderella stores, the development of private labels to be especially highlighted in our Cinderella 'Now' concept stores, new store openings in SM's Mall of Asia and other provincial sites and the building of a stronger corporate image. Cinderella North Mall in Glorietta will be our next big project and so far renovating a total of 7,800 square meters out of its current 13,000 square meters of space will definitely mark a milestone for the new Cinderella.

Elizabeth A. Reyes, president, Healthway Clinics

2005 was a great growth year for us at Healthway Medical and Clarity Aesthetic and Laser Center as we realized our objectives of increased healthy awareness among the general public and widening our client base.

In spite of the difficult personal economies, our patients fully appreciated the importance of maintaining one's total health and well being and thus attain prevention of illness.

We are very bullish about 2006 as we seek various modes of expansion to better reach our target market.

Albert Garcia, president, Garsworth Marketing Corp.

C-Lium Fibre had a moving 2005 as the number one brand in the Natural Fibre Market. It set industry standards for product quality.

We have a positive outlook for 2006.

Committing to the commitment

AT 67, THOMAS EDISON WATCHED AS fire destroyed much of his work and equipment. Time to retire? Time to hang up the lab coat?

No way.

"All our mistakes are burned up," the inventor said. "Now we can start anew."

There is a time to retire, but Edison knew his time hadn't come. The fire that consumed his work didn't destroy the fire that burned within him to continue his work. Edison's commitment remained.

People tend to associate commitment with emotions. If they feel the right way, then they can follow through on their commitments. But true commitment doesn't work that way.

Commitment is not an emotion; it's a character quality that enables us to reach our goals.

Emotions go up and down all the time, but commitment must remain rock solid. A solid team—whether it's in business, sports, marriage or a volunteer organization—must have team players who are solidly committed to the team.

Let's look at four things every team player needs to know about being committed:

1. Commitment is usually discovered in the midst of adversity.

You never know the level of your commitment or that of a team player until things get tough. Every one of us could stay committed to a marriage if everything was always good.

Every one of us could stay committed to good health as long as we were healthy. The trick is to stay committed to the commitment when the economy takes a turn for the worse or when you lose your biggest account or when your plant burns to the ground.

Commitment, because it is a character trait, is revealed, not built, by adversity.

2. Commitment does not depend on gifts and abilities.

Commitment and talent, I have found, are unconnected. Many very talented people lack commitment. Many people who lack skills and talent are tremendously committed. So if you find somebody who's extremely talented, there is no guarantee that there is a high level of commitment.

For this reason, it becomes a great day when we connect talent with commitment—for ourselves and for those on the

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell



teams we lead. The moment that happens, the team goes to a whole new level.

3. Commitment results from choices, not conditions.

In writing about choices, Frederic Flach writes, "there are the moments when, because of a readiness within us and a collaboration with events occurring around us, we are forced to seriously reappraise ourselves and the conditions under which we live and to make certain choices that will affect the rest of our lives."

Our commitment springs from those choices.

4. Commitment lasts when it is based on values.

Establishing commitment from a team is a critical piece of leadership, but leaders I work with are equally concerned about sustaining that commitment.

I've found the only way to sustain commitment is to link it with the personal values of an individual. Once your commitment is based on your values, you have no problem sustaining it.

Values are what drive your choices; they transcend your talents and skills and they stand up under the tests of adversity.

Commitment based on something other than solid values usually is a house of cards; when the wind kicks up, the house comes down.

Remember, commitment is not an emotion; it's a character quality that enables us to reach our goals.

For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at maxwell@inspire.ph or call 813-2732/03 and ask for Gina. Text MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily SMS leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless.

Why and when, not just what and how

AS A NEW YEAR DAWNS, IT IS PERHAPS USEFUL TO KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE MANY DECISIONS WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE IN 2006.

It is my contention that we often end up making poor decisions because most of us tend to focus on the "what" and "how." We don't spend sufficient time trying to understand the "why" and "when."

I will illustrate my observations using the issue of the constitutional amendments, which all Filipino citizens eligible to vote should make up their minds about.

The Constitutional Commission that Gloria Macapagal Arroyo formed has focused from the start on changing our form of government from presidential, unitary, with a unicameral Congress to a bicameral parliamentary and federal form of government.

The worst justification for Constitutional change came from Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA), who said the presidential and unitary system makes politicians corrupt.

We should examine whether it is the system or the people who cause corruption in the Presidential system.

Parliamentary vs Presidential

There are a number of true believers in the parliamentary form of government and they bring up a number of arguments.

The parliamentary government proponents claim that countries with parliamentary governments have developed faster than the Philippines. They frequently cite Thailand and Malaysia.

But those who argue for a Presidential form of government cite Korea and Taiwan. So we seem to have a stalemate. If one looks into each country more deeply one will see a more common factor that leads to their economic development: less corruption.

If one studies the failure of the Philippines one will note that over the years we have fallen from one of the most honest governments in the world to near the bottom of the list.

Those proposing a parliamentary form of government argue that under a parliamentary form of government, we will not have to go to the streets to overthrow a bad leader.

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Manuel Alcuaz Jr.

A vote of no confidence would be sufficient to change governments.

But a corrupt prime minister with many parliamentarians in his coalition would still be very difficult to overthrow.

The executive-legislative gridlock is blamed for our slow economic developments.

How many new laws do we really need? We have enough good ones and, unfortunately, a number of bad ones.

What the executive should do is to implement the good laws and recommend amendments for bad laws.

The judiciary should focus on streamlining its processes so that our citizens can look to the judicial system to get justice.

One of the reasons why Korea has become such an economic power is its effective judicial system. They have been able to quickly try and convict a few past presidents. Many of whom were generals, not just politicians.

I think that fusing the executive and the legislative is not the solution. Let us look into changes that will make each branch more effective and efficient.

The solution to the legislative gridlock is not the abolition of the Senate. It is the delegation, decentralization, or federalization of a lot of the local in nature work that has to currently pass through both houses of congress.

Most probably, it does not require constitutional change. The senate and the house should get together and pass a law delegating many of its nuisance responsibilities to the provinces, cities, and municipalities or perhaps to a historical names commission.

If Congress wants to retain its right to change some names and grant some franchises, it should do so by exception rather than by retaining the entire burden.

In business, we follow the practice of delegation and decentralization and letting those in the best position to make a decision do so.

We don't make top management

make decisions for which they don't have the required time and information to decide wisely.

Abolition of the Senate

If one looks beyond the legislative gridlock argument, the real reason why many trapos want to get rid of the Senate is because it stands in the way of more anomalies.

Unfortunately, we cannot depend on our judicial system to run after the crooks and the scoundrels.

The last defense of the people against corrupt government is a nationally elected Senate.

In government as well as in business management, there is a need for geographical as well as functional distribution of authority and responsibility.

We already have a decentralized framework of government. However, local governments are frequently hampered by delays in the releases of their Internal Revenue Allotments.

As a result, local governments are unable to move forward with their initiatives and are forced to toe the line of the President to get the money that is due them.

If the parliamentary system really was that much better, then we should make the transition immediately after its ratification. The 2007 elections would be a good time to do so.

What is strange is that the GMA Constitutional Commission now wants to have no elections in 2007. Extend all terms to 2010 and transition in 10 years.

This really raises serious questions. Did the Commission really consider what would be best for the country?

Or did they spend all that time and money to come out with what is good for GMA.

INFOTECH

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3G in RP: Looking back and looking ahead

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

FINALLY, THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission (NTC) has announced that four—and not five as earlier stated in its rules and regulations—operators have been granted government licenses to operate third-generation (3G) mobile networks.

Three incumbents and one new player are expected to battle it out next year, as they leap into the next-generation of mobile phone service where mobile Internet, multimedia and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services are also expected to be offered.

While the interest in 3G has somehow waned in recent years, save for the strong opposition by local operators to jump into this so-called "network upgrade," industry pundits believe that 3G will eventually happen in the country. It is only a question of when 3G services will become mainstream.

Smart Communications Inc., the wireless subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., said it has started rapidly deploying its 3G mobile network nationwide following the awarding of 3G frequencies by the NTC.

The mobile operator demonstrated earlier its own 3G service in Cebu through a video call to Manila, and to a roaming international subscriber of Telecom Italia Mobile. Rival Globe Telecom also made its own 3G test at this year's national advertising congress, signaling that the battle was on.

These 3G tests were made months after lawyers of both companies insisted that the country is not yet ready for 3G. Both mobile operators, who now control majority of the local market for mobile phone services, said deploying 3G was too costly for them. They also argued that 3G handsets were still expensive and only a few people could afford it.

However, as the lawyers tried to fend off competition that is expected to come from newer players, Smart and Globe joined the bidding for 3G licenses, which was initiated by the NTC despite strong opposition from the incumbents. On the afternoon of Dec. 28, 2005, the NTC issued its decision, saying that Smart, Globe, Digital Telecommunications and Connectivity Unlimited Resources Enterprises Inc. (Cure) were all being granted 3G licenses.

Smart and Globe have issued separate statements revealing that 3G tests have been ongoing prior to the granting of the government license.

"We have been testing a number of 3G cell sites and can now service customers on a trial basis in Metro Manila and Metro Cebu. What's more, we have already ordered the network facilities needed to establish nationwide 3G coverage at the shortest possible time," Smart president and CEO Napoleon Nazareno said.

Nazareno vowed that Smart would repeat the rapid rollout that the operator accomplished in deploying its analog and GSM network infrastructure.

"We are in 3G for real," the Smart executive added.

After getting a perfect score on a grading system used by the NTC to gauge the capability of local operators to massively and effectively provide 3G services, Smart was assigned the 15 Megahertz radio frequency band allocation, the company said.

3G took a lot of turns and passed many speed bumps down the road leading toward the Philippines

Globe, on the other hand, was granted the 10 MHz band, the company noted in a separate statement.

"We are bullish about this new development in our company as we get ready to provide the 3G applications that would greatly benefit our valued customers. This year, we extensively worked on our 3G offering. Globe successfully completed its first 3G video calls in July and has complied with all the NTC's 3G requirements by October (2005)," said Rodolfo Salalima, Globe senior vice president for corporate and regulatory affairs.

Meanwhile, Smart insisted that the company had started preparations for a seamless transition to 3G as early as five years ago.

Smart in cooperation with Nokia Networks conducted the first successful 3G video call in the country in the presence of NTC officials in 2000. Using experimental equipment, this test call recorded data transfer rates of up to 216.9 kbps, the company said.

Rolando Peña, head of Smart's network services division, said the company has made preparations for the easy migration to 3G.

"The installation of this modular GSM equipment fits neatly into Smart's overall 3G preparations. Now that the 3G equipment is available, the 3G capability of these base stations can be readily activated, greatly simplifying the

rollout of 3G infrastructure," Nazareno added.

3G provides faster transmission speeds that make possible high bandwidth applications such as video calls and video streaming. Browsing the Internet and downloading large files would be faster when using 3G, as this technology offers full mobility.

A recent survey by the Global mobile Suppli-

ers Association indicated that there are now 100 3G/WCDMA networks in 42 countries worldwide.

WCDMA is one of the global standards which enable the provision of enhanced mobile multimedia services such as music, TV, video, rich entertainment content and Internet access.

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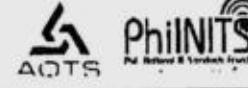
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Virus makers got wiser in 2005

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

AUTHORS OF MALICIOUS SOFTWARE—viruses, Trojan horses, and worms—began wising up in 2005 as recorded malicious applications were being spread for profiteering and scamming, according to software security maker Trend Micro.

Trend Micro also predicts more such attacks in 2006 as malware authors are lured by increased worldwide usage of the Internet and new social engineering techniques to take advantage of for their purposes.

Despite predictions of rampant worm attacks in 2006, the company admitted that the only prominent trend was the more criminal malware-for-profit. Many of these attacks were launched through phishing, i.e. sending spam e-mail that seem to have come from a legitimate source but are really an attempt by scammers to capture personal data.

Both phishing and Trojan horses consist of gathering account information, user names, and passwords for bank, e-mail, online gaming and online shopping accounts, Trend Micro said. A critical scam approach is capturing important files or data by aiming at persons with a company or government office.

In such cases, authors of phishing e-mail have also learned to lessen the chances of detection by moving or killing their phishing sites in a few days. Trojan horses, on the other hand, can remain undetected in a computer for longer periods and continue sending private information.

Trend warns that Trojan horses could become more specialized and are less likely to be discovered, prompting malware authors to continue making more Trojan horses than viruses or worms, most of which are easily detected and eradicated.

"By combining these elements: the promise of illicit profit from spammers and phishers, and the fallibility of human trust from worms, the malware authors of today have achieved what the first Trojan horse ever did: not content with destroying the city, now it is looting coffers everywhere."

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GENERAL MANAGER

FOR
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 (GUMELCO)
 Jordan, Guimaras

Qualifications:

- 30-50 Years Old
- Male or Female
- Graduate of Business Administration, Engineering (Electrical, Mechanical, ECE), Accounting, Finance, Management or Behavioral Science
- With Master's Degree or Post-Graduate Degree preferred
- Must have at least five (5) years managerial experience in a utility-related business enterprise
- Must be Computer literate
- Must be willing to relocate with his/her family in Jordan, Guimaras

Starting Salary P30,000.00

Application form and additional information may be obtained from the Institutional Development Department, 6th Floor, NEA Building, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Deadline for submission of application form is on 26 January 2006.

(Sgd.) EDITA S. BUENO
 Administrator



Republic of the Philippines
 NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
 Region VII, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

GRAINS HANDLING SERVICES FOR NFA CEBU

HANDLING SERVICES OF 644,000 BAGS GRAINS STOCKS WITHIN NFA WAREHOUSES

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY, through its *Corporate Budget* for 2006 intends to apply the sum of **ONE MILLION NINE HUNDRED THIRTY TWO THOUSAND PESOS (P1,932,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Grains Handling Services for Cebu of NFA Region VII. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY now invites Bidders from eligible Bidders for Grains Handling Services of NFA Region VII. Delivery of the GOODS is required upon receipt of Notice to Proceed until December 31, 2006, or upon completion of the services for the volume of 644,000 bags, whichever is applicable. The grains handling services comprise the following:

PROVINCE	LOT #	LOCATION	VOLUME (bags of 50 kg)	ABC (P)
CEBU	1	BOGO	168,000	504,000.00
	2	BADIAN	154,000	462,000.00
	3	STA. FE	168,000	504,000.00
	4	TUDELA	154,000	462,000.00
		TOTAL	644,000	1,932,000.00

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietors, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents. Instructions to Bidders (ITB). The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY and inspect the Bidding Documents at NFA, Banilad, Cebu City starting January 02 to January 10, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00)**. The method of payment will

MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 2006

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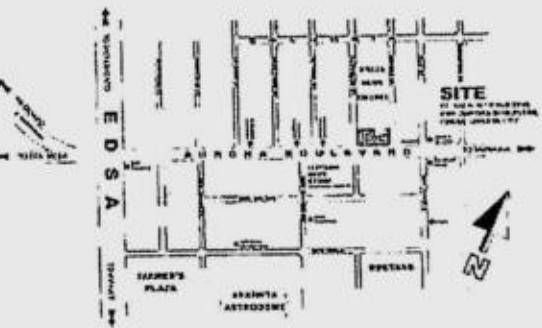
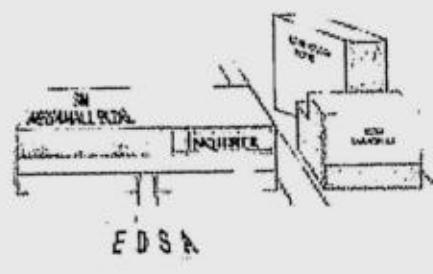
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CITY GOVERNMENT OF LEGAZPI
City Hall Compound, Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Legazpi, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below.

ITB No.

A. Waste Collection Equipment
1.0 Two (2) Ea. CAB CHASSIS
Forward control, 4x2, 6-Cylinder 4 cycle
2.0 Two (2) Ea. Refuse Collection
System and Ejection System to be
Mounted on the 15,000 kg. GVW
Cab truck Chassis
2.1 BODY VOLUME 13.0 CBM Minimum
2.2 HYDRAULIC EQUIPMENT(s)

B. Garbage Bins
Materials-Plastic, Fiberglass,
Galvanized steel, Sizes: Ranges from
140,240,360 liters, 1.0.1 1CBM
Quantity From 160 pcs. to 600 pcs.
Depending upon the size of each BIN (vol.)

C. TRACK TYPE WADER
Powered by 4 cylinder water cooled,
4 stroke cycle diesel engine developing
a minimum 100kw Flywheel Power
Torque 680 N.M.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Bidding for the above requirement are scheduled on January 25, 2006 at BAC Conference Room, City Engineer's Office, Legazpi City and pertinent Bid Documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat, City Hall Compound, Legazpi City upon payment of a non refundable fee of Twenty One Thousand (P 21,000.00).

Interested suppliers are requested to submit their Letter of Intent (LOI) on January 6, 2006 and to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on January 13, 2006 at the BAC Conference Room, City Engineer's Office, Legazpi City.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

CITY GOVERNMENT OF LEGAZPI reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the City Government.

The Chairman
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - Dec 25, 2005 & Jan 2, 2006)

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LA UNION
City of San Fernando

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

NAME OF CONTRACT	LOCATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	CONTRACT DURATION
1. DRUGS & MEDICINES	Provincial Capitol Building, City of San Fernando, La Union	Purchases of Drugs & Medicines, Medical/Surgical Laboratory Supplies and Reagents, Dental, X-Ray and Ortho for LUMC and District Hospitals	P 12,554,882.95 P 6,508,322.75 P 1,803,249.00 P 160,854.50 P 532,543.00 P 149,110.00	180 CD 180 CD 180 CD 180 CD 180 CD 180 CD
2. MEDICAL/SURGICAL				
3. LABORATORY				
4. DENTAL				
5. X-RAY				
6. ORTHO				

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	January 6, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	January 11, 2006, 9:00 AM
3. Opening of Bids	January 30, 2006, 9:00 AM, Diego Silang Hall, Provincial Capitol, SFC
a. Drugs and Medicines	January 31, 2006, 9:00 AM
b. Medical/Surgical	February 01, 2006, 9:00 AM
c. Laboratory	February 01, 2006, 1:00 PM
d. Dental	February 01, 2006, 1:00 PM
e. X-Ray	February 01, 2006, 1:00 PM
f. Ortho	February 01, 2006, 1:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	February 02 to February 16, 2006
5. Post-Qualification	February 02 to February 16, 2006
6. Notice of Award	February 02 to February 16, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00 to the Office of the Provincial Treasurer's Cashier.

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) DR. GEOFFREY S. TILAN
BAC Chairman

Contact Person:

(Sgd.) MS. CATHERINE E. FRANCO
BAC TWG Chairman/Assistant Provincial Budget Officer
Tel. No. (072) 700-5309

(PDI - Jan 2 & 9, 2006)

Rice retailers urge lifting of NFA rice import tariffs

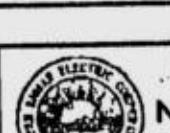
THE REGIONAL CHAPTER OF THE CONFEDERATION OF GRAINS RETAILERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES INC (GRECON) IN REGION VIII TOGETHER WITH THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS IN ZAMBALAS AND DAVAO DEL SUR ARE ASKING THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY THE SOLE RICE IMPORTER FOR FOOD SECURITY STOCKS AND EXEMPT THE AGENCY FROM PAYING TARIFFS ON ITS RICE IMPORTS. IN THEIR RESOLUTION ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO AND THE MEMBERS OF THE LOWER HOUSE AND THE SENATE, THE GRECON SAID THAT LIFTING PAYMENT OF THE NFA'S TARIFFS WILL ALLOW THE AGENCY TO EFFECTIVELY PERFORM ITS FOOD SECURITY MANDATE AND TO CONTINUE TO SELL GOVERNMENT RICE AT A LEVEL AFFORDABLE TO ORDINARY CONSUMERS, ESPECIALLY THE POOR. THE RETAILERS' GROUP STRESSED THAT NFA'S TARIFF OBLIGATIONS AFFECT THE AGENCY'S FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM AND ITS

PRICE STABILIZATION FUNCTION ASIDE FROM DRAINING THE AGENCY'S FINANCES. THE ASSOCIATION IS COMPOSED OF NFA-ACCREDITED RICE RETAILERS, NUMBERING 80,000 NATIONWIDE. BEING THE NFA'S GRAINS MARKETING ARM, GRECON SAID THEIR ASSOCIATION SERVES AS THE PRIMARY CONDUIT OF AFFORDABLE GOVERNMENT RICE TO CONSUMERS ASSURING PRICE AND SUPPLY STABILITY IN THE LOCAL MARKET. THIS SCHEME ALLOWS THE RICE RETAILING SECTOR TO SUBSTANTIALLY CONTRIBUTE IN SUSTAINING THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY. THERE IS A NEED FOR THE NFA TO REGULATE RICE DISTRIBUTION NOT ONLY OF LOCAL RICE BUT ALSO THE IMPORTED STOCKS TO PREEMPT RICE PRICE MANIPULATION IN THE LOCAL MARKET, ACCORDING TO THE GRECON. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NFA PROGRAMS, THE PUBLIC MAY SEND THEIR INQUIRIES VIA THE 'TEXT NFA PROGRAM' THROUGH MOBILE NUMBER 0917-6210927.

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INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Northern Samar Electric Cooperative Incorporated (NORSAMELCO) invites interested suppliers to participate in Public Bidding for the supply, delivery, installation and commissioning of one (1) unit Brand New 10 MVA Sub-station to be constructed at Calaraman N. Samar.

Prospective bidders have the financial, technical, production and after sales service capability necessary to perform the contract. And have completed the similar project.

Interested bidders must submit their pre-qualification document as follows:

- Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws
- BIR or VAT Certificate as appropriate
- Audited Financial Statement for the current year duly received by BIR
- Business Permit for the current year
- List of similar project or contract if any, name, address, tel. no., amount, date and year completed

After submission of the above requirement, Bid Documents may be obtained at the PBAC Secretary during office hour starting Jan. 3, 2006 to Jan. 14, 2006 and upon payment of non-refundable fee amounting to P5,500.00

A pre-bid conference will be held on January 24, 2006 at 10am and submission of a sealed bid is on February 21, 2006. Opening of bids will be held on February 22, 2006 at 10am NORSAMELCO main office.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of Cash, Manager's Check in the amount equivalent to one percent (1%) or Bidder's Bond in the amount equivalent to Two and half percent (2.5%) of the total bid price.

NORSAMELCO reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any minor defect, therein and accept the bids considered most advantageous and responsive to proposal.

(Sgd.) HENRY C. BANJAWAN
PBAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) SALVADOR G. HERNANDEZ
General Manager

(PDI - Jan 2, 2006)



MONDAY,
JANUARY 2, 2006

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LIFESTYLE

The best and the worst of Philippine art in 2005



GUYITO
artwork
by Bin
Samonte

Guyito makeovers. Hot-selling artists Malang and Bencab led established and emergent artists in interpreting Guyito, the carabao mascot created by Jess Abrera for the INQUIRER. To mark the paper's 20th anniversary, they painted over 20 Guyito fiberglass sculptures by Sajid Imao and the result was creative ferment at its best. The Guyitos will be installed in reading corners and school libraries all over the country as mascots promoting literacy and the reading habit among the young. Joining Malang and Bencab were Kidlat Tahimik, Jack Salud, Ernesto Patricio, Steve Santos, Lydia Velasco, Fernando Sena, Salvador Convocar, Soler, Cana, Bing Siochi, Roel Obemio, Tres Roman, Wilfredo Offemaria, Bin Samonte, Jef Samonte, Romeo Forbes, Rex Tatlonghari and Anton Balao.

Romulo Galicano winning the grand prize in the international portrait contest of the Portrait Society of America. His portrait of his friend Eddie Chu earned plaudits from such acclaimed artists as John Liberace, John Howard Sanden and Bart Lindstrom.

The three-part Federico Alcuaz retrospective at Ayala Museum. Curated by Rod. Paras-Perez, it reaffirmed Alcuaz's contributions to Philippine art. The coffee-table book, edited also by Paras-Perez, is an intelligent yet colorful survey of the artist's variegated works.

Well-curated shows. More and more galleries and museums have come up with well-conceptualized shows, such as Renato Agustin Ong's "Archaeology" at the UP Vargas Museum, the annual "Zero-In" at Lopez Museum, Ayala Museum, Ateneo Gallery and Museo Pambata, the Ronald Ventura show at Ateneo, the series showing the collection of the National Museum, the various exhibits at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Metropolitan Museum, the various shows at West Gallery, the "Kristo" exhibit by various artists at Gallery Nine, and "dog/god" by the Thomasian Young Artists Circle at the UST Museum, CCP and Iloilo Arts Center.

Alternative art spaces, such as Blueroom (Bangkal, Makati), Avellana Art Gallery (Harrison Street, Pasay), UFO (Samal Street, Mandaluyong), and even Mag:Net (ABS-CBN in Quezon City and Paseo Center in Makati). Their rise means providing art-lovers and consumers with options other than the malls, which however continue to be the primary engine for the art market.

Hot-selling young artists barely out of fine-arts school. Romeo Forbes had a sold-out show of the large-scale works he created for the children's book, "Elias and His Trees." Leonardo Aguinaldo, winner of the Philip Morris prize, also had a well-received show at Hiraya. Andres Barroquinto, winner of the Nokia prize, was a hit in Singapore. He also joined Wesley Valenzuela, Jaime Pacena II, Buen Calubaya, CJ Tañedo, Lawrence Borsotto, Lindslee and Ivan Roxas in the critically acclaimed group show, "dog/god," which toured around the country.

Web Gising. The digital art contest by the National Committee on the Visual Arts of the NCCA was a boost to the nascent art form in the Philippines.

THE BEST/C2



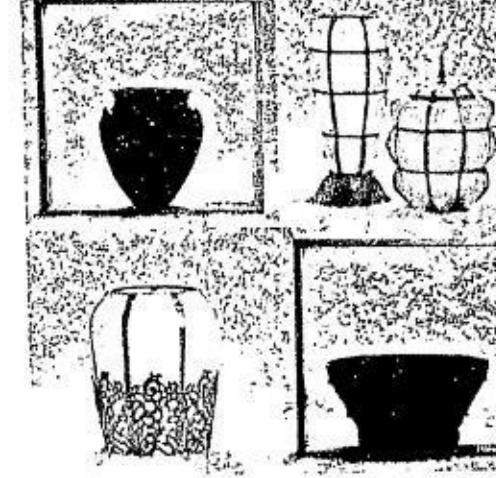
ANDRES Barroquinto's "Pest"



"PORTRAIT of Eddie Chua," by Romulo Galicano



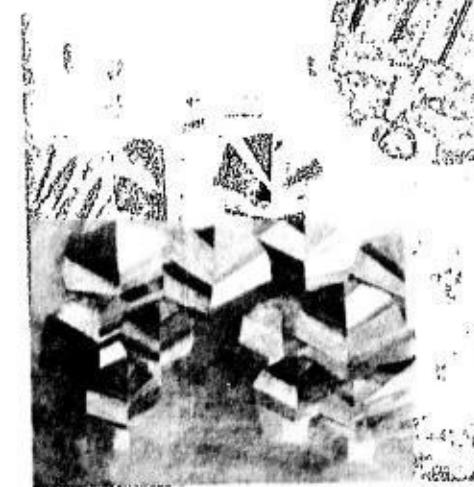
"SELF-PORTRAITS," by Federico Alcuaz



"ARCHAEOLOGY," by Renato Agustin Ong



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4401 Series of 2005.

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PLDT

LIFESTYLE



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Art booms and busts

By Constantino C. Tejero

AS IN YEARS PAST, this one has seen what is good and what is bad in the visual arts in the country.

First, there is an art boom, which can be gauged by the proliferation of art galleries and exhibits. And new artists are emerging from the woodwork by the dozens.

Second, it is at that time of the year when art is suddenly made available to all. It has now become regular for some galleries

to offer as their yearender exhibits of small pieces by masters and upcoming masters at bargain-floor prices.

West Gallery at the Artwalk, L4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, and in its main gallery in Mary Santos Arcade at 48 West Ave., Quezon City, is presenting "12 x 9," an exhibit of over a hundred paintings in 12" x 9" format by 63 artists.

Ordinary gallery-goers can now shop for high-grade art at a steal, such as Rolly Acuña's oil on canvas for P2,500. Expectedly, the steepest are pieces by a National Artist like Arturo Luz, who

sells his acrylic on canvas of the same size for P48,000. Or of Roberto Chabet, who, of course, doesn't sell his art.

Third, the avant-garde is alive and well in the local art world, as exemplified by Chabet's mystifying art installations, Gabby Barredo's bizarre kinetic sculptures, and radical artworks and happenings by brash young artists, particularly those from the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts.

Fourth, international art keeps coming to the country, facilitated by institutions such as Ayala Museum, Metropolitan Museum of

Manila, Alliance Française, and vanguard art galleries like Finale and Galeria Duemilla. This encourages the interaction of local and foreign artists, further enriching Philippine art.

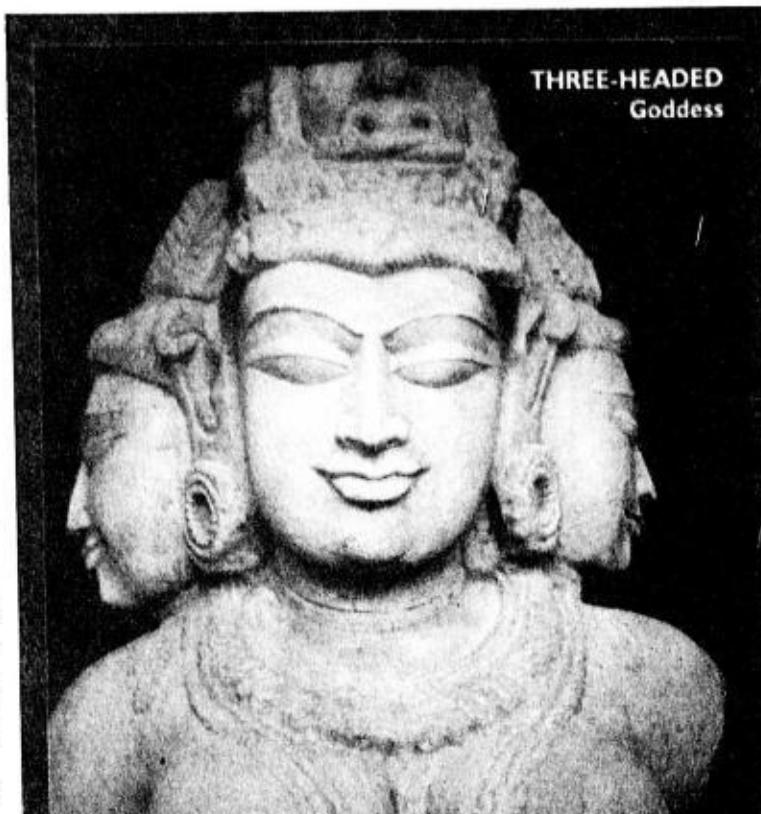
Fifth, the rise of community art as exemplified by the Organization of Banglos Sculptors, and the championing of regional art and indigenous culture by brave galleries like Hiraya. These demonstrate that art really belongs to the people.

On the downsides, first, some galleries and even museums don't know how to properly handle or take care of artworks. Space and budgetary constraints have forced them to stack freshly painted canvases at the backroom after the exhibit closes, or, without air-conditioning, let masterpieces by Old Masters gather dust and mildew in the basement.

Second, the cropping up of facile art, from conceptual installations to happenings to naifs.

Third, the commodification of art by an increasingly consumerist Philippine society. A generation ago, the young wanted to become lawyers or doctors to get rich, now they enroll at the College of Fine Arts.

There are a lot more we can point out, but most are negligible. Whether these things happening in the local art world are good or bad, so long as there is movement (a shift or change), it can only mean the arts are alive.



Power, force and feminine energy

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE FIGURES ARE NOT large but the impression to the viewer is one of power emanating through the centuries, specifically woman power. There is a sense of massiveness.

The women are Hindu goddesses with ample breasts, tapering waists, a benign expression; and they are caparisoned in ornate pendants, beads, bracelets and headdresses.

The Hindu gods like Vishnu are also represented, but they are outnumbered by the women deities like Ganga, the River Goddess; Parvati, the Love Goddess; Lakshmi, the Restless Goddess of Fortune; and Saraswati, the Unblemished Ascetic Goddesses.

Spiritual yet erotic, the intoxicating sculptures made of sandstone were created by artists and artisans during the 9th-12th centuries. They once adorned Khajuraho temples in the Chatarpur district of Madhya, India.

The Khajuraho temples used to number 85 but only 24 have survived. The rest were "devastated by men and nature," as one curator put it.

The works are on display at Raffles Fine Arts Gallery (8950409) at 58 Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati City. And they will be showcased there until all or most are bought. Raffles is an outlet of the Singapore-based Tomlinson Group, which earlier this year mounted an exhibit of antique Tibetan door



IN A YOGA TRANCE

paintings, also in Makati. "The Hindu gods and goddesses should not be taken literally," pointed out overall gallery manager Menchie Comparato in a recent media briefing. "They are cosmic forces."

The sculptures were executed in the round, in medium or high relief, on the outer and inner walls of the temples, and in pillars and ceilings.

We have dancers, graceful nymphs, attendants of the higher deities, couples in passionate embrace, powerful goddesses, and vengeful gods.

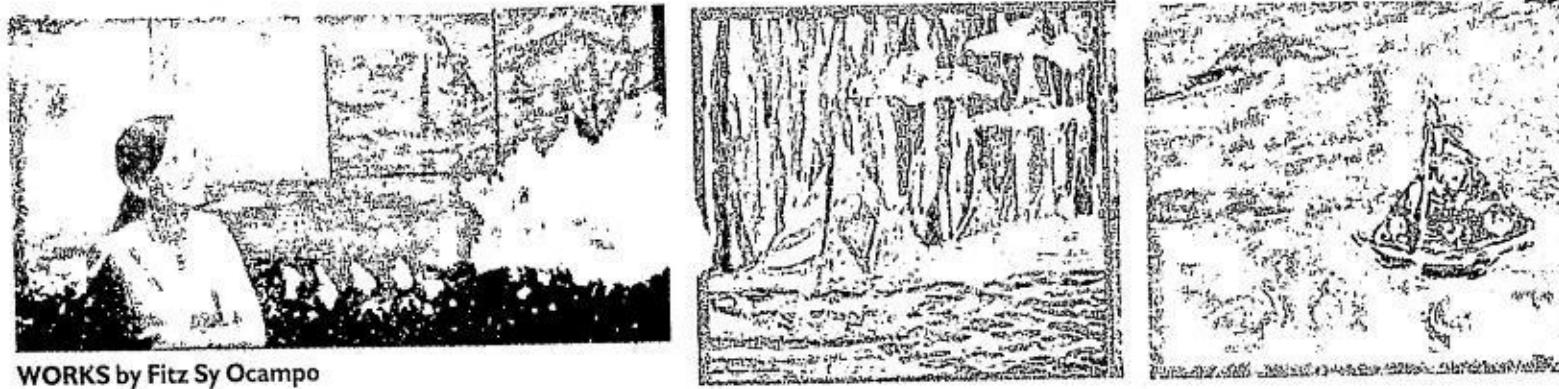
"Ganga the river goddess is visualized as voluptuous and beautiful, as are all other major Indian goddesses," explained Ma. Patricia Puno, the gallery's managing director.

Among the most intriguing of the works is the Three-headed Goddess, which is the female counterpart to the male Hindu triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

The figure wears ornaments on its heads, torso and limbs to celebrate the beauty of the human body.

The work is called Shakti which, Puno said, represents "the potency of the women to procreate. Shakti means power, force and feminine energy."

"In light of the foregoing, it is quite ironic that women are often relegated to the background in India," Puno concluded. "By reviewing the role of these female deities through these sculptures, we can perhaps rediscover and recapture the very important symbolism of women in Indian civilization and society."



WORKS by Fitz Sy Ocampo

The bounty of her art

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

FOR HER DEBUT SHOW, FITZ SY Ocampo presents over two dozen paintings in acrylic, a medium that lends itself well to her endearing explorations of nature's bounty.

A Management graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University, Ocampo began her love affair with art 15 years ago when she trained in various media under renowned realist painter Rody Herrera. This was reinforced by her extensive exposure to a wide variety of art materials and media that the family-owned art supplies store, Devor, imports, markets and distributes.

In the last five years, Ocampo has lectured in various schools, teaching art and interior-design students the properties and applications of oil and acrylic. This year, she organized the "Art 4 Kids" lecture for children on the basics of acrylic painting.

Having resolved to pursue art full-time, she resigned from her work as assistant manager for cargo operations. Ocampo found inspiration from her numerous travels around the country, intent as she is on creating works that celebrate the beauty of the Philippines and praise God's greatness and boundless love.



Uncanny

The exhibit, "Fitz of Inspiration, A Celebration of Tropical Philippines," (Manila Peninsula Gallery) demonstrates the 26-year-old artist's uncanny handling of acrylic as medium. With her flamboyant brushwork and bravura color sense, not to mention her unsparring if generous paint application, Ocampo has created a suite of paintings that, by turns, excite and inspire, both sensual and spiritual in the depiction of the painting process and material.

The challenge indubitably posed by these images goes beyond the tried-and-tested path of most

painters who are merely obsessed with surface gloss. But in the hands of an astute technician like Ocampo, the work acquires a truly complex character, evoking the naturally cast as well as man-made shadows these sites conjure.

The convivial atmosphere evoked by these images comes from the lived-in familiarity that Ocampo wields, being a seasoned traveler both here and abroad.

There are pieces that are more wildly experimental in treatment, such as the multi-paneled painting, "Boracay's Kaleidoscope of Colors," a large (36" x 48") work that encapsulates the many-splendored beauty of Boracay. There are also works that incorporate a variety of found objects, such as slippers, drift wood, shells and stones and pebbles, all aptly emblematic of the artist's constant journeys throughout the archipelago.

In this debut show, Fitz Sy Ocampo has proven beyond doubt that the artist in her has finally emerged. Her perseverance, unshifting devotion to her muse, and her deep spirituality have made this young artist a worthy addition to the roster of names who are bound to make a name for themselves.

E-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

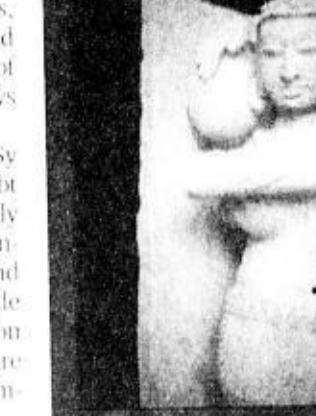


Artist Ang Kiukok last May, but the occasion reaffirmed friendships and banished petty rivalries. Ang's generation of artists—Malang, James Onglupo, Ong Bunglan, Romulo Olazo, Lito Antonio—toasted the man and his works as well as their fellowship in the name of art. The fellowship has been

reaffirmed with the death last month of Rafael Asuncion.

Manila's hosting of the Asian International Art Exhibition, the exhibit, ongoing at the Ayala Museum, gathers the preeminent contemporary artists across Asia, a rare opportunity for Filipino artists, enamored with Western models, to interact with their Asian counterparts. Hosting a show this big is an organizer's nightmare, and it is to the credit of the unflappable Ramon Orlina that the exhibit has been managed effectively.

The Francesco Monti retrospective, through the efforts of art historian Victoria Herrera and the National Committee on Galleries of the NCCA, the expatriate Italian sculptor who did several seminal master-



SURA-SUNDARI, Hindu goddess



FRANCESCO Monti

pieces at the Metropolitan Theater, Santo Domingo, UST, UP Visayas, and who trained Ting Ping Lay, Virginia Ty and other Filipino sculptors, was introduced to a new generation.

Arts-management courses. The proliferation of arts-management courses means



RAMON Orlina

there's a boom in the arts. But it also means the entry of mercenaries in the art scene, if not of mercenary management schools that seek merely to cash in on the arts and culture.

Lito B. Zulueta



JUVENTAL Sando

From page C1

Sando home for good. Now in his 70s, the Paris-based Spanish artist who grew up and trained in the Philippines is set to make Manila his permanent base. He continues to be a tireless international artist whose works are collected in the chief galleries and museums in the West, but he says he has always regarded the Philippines as home.

In a related development, Filipino expatriate artists have started to be more visible locally, such as Manuel Ocampo, Gregory Raymond Halili and Jill Raymundo. There have also been reports that Manuel Rodriguez Sr., the print vanguard, is coming home.

Fellowship of masters. The art world grieved the death of National

Artist Ang Kiukok last May, but the occasion reaffirmed friendships and banished petty rivalries. Ang's generation of artists—Malang, James Onglupo, Ong Bunglan, Romulo Olazo, Lito Antonio—toasted the man and his works as well as their fellowship in the name of art. The fellowship has been

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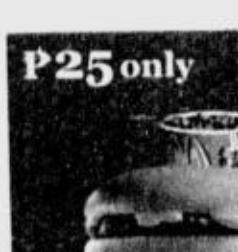
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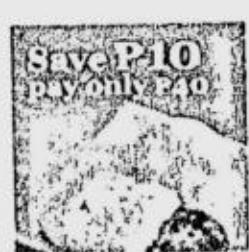
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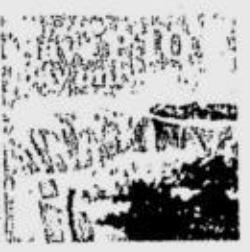
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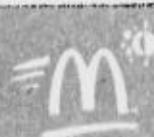


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Magpasalaysay

Feeling good in 2006

IT GOES BACK MANY YEARS, OUR constant talk about nation-building. Even if we've been trying to do it for as long as I can remember, nobody has come out to say that we've achieved it.

We are getting there, though. Definitely there have been concrete gains in nation-building: E-Vat, a stronger peso, a succession of political crises weathered though not necessarily solved, many kilometers of new highway and bridges built, a new international airport in Manila waiting to become operational and, no matter what, a sprinkling of tourist arrivals.

We count the number of call centers that have mushroomed all over the country, as we do the increasing number of OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) and caregivers that we send abroad every day.

Impressive gains

The media report new and impressive gains daily, adding up the plus marks for our grand nation-building tally.

We keep a scorecard of the measurables, the physical hardware of nation-building. We do

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

not tally the software. Now 2006 would be a good year to start doing that.

The software is really about our quality of life. Of course, quality of life improves alongside an improvement in, among other things, governance, economy and infrastructure.

Quality of life is about having comfortable, liveable cities with amenities that take the stress out of urban life; of having pristine and productive rural areas that support human life; of having traditions that continue through the years; of maintaining that Filipino-ness in ourselves and in our daily lives.

Hardware? It's a rat race. It develops so rapidly and is designed with obsolescence in mind. There will always be someone who will

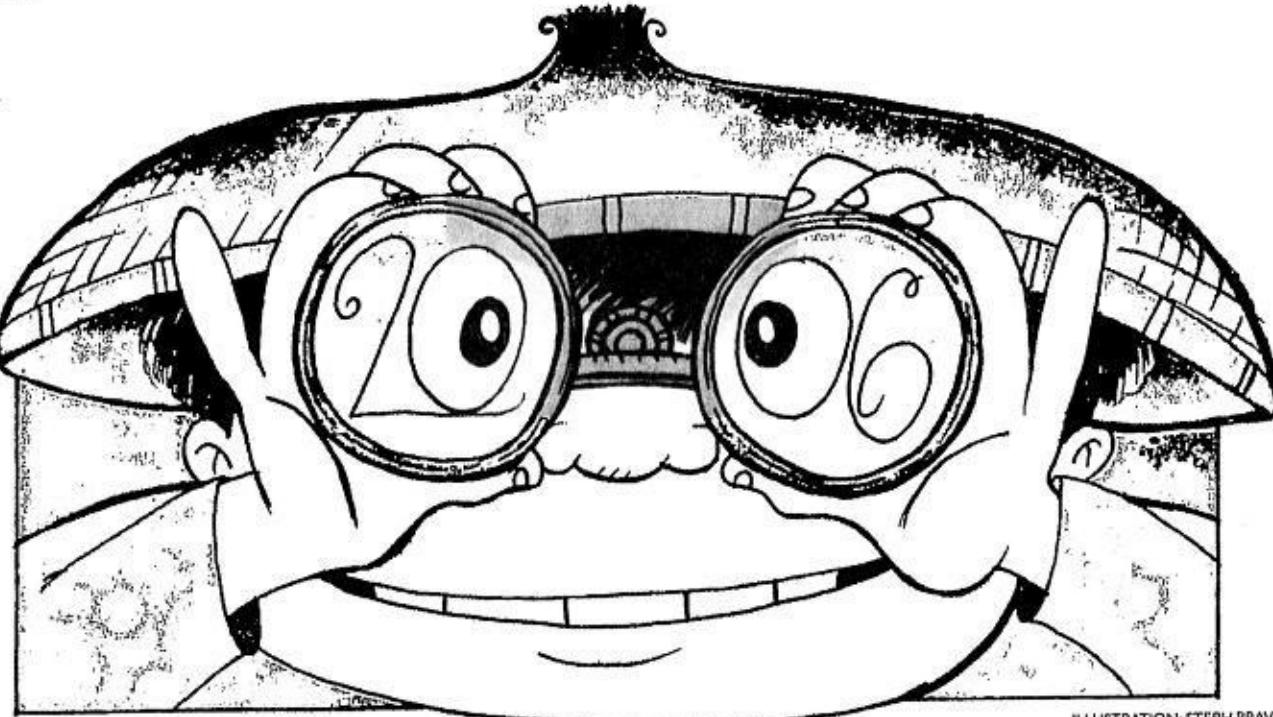


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

have a newer and better version, no matter how hard we try to have the latest technology. It is a one-way street.

Software? That is where we excel. For instance, without the culture of caring where each Filipino is bred in, there will be no success with call centers, OFWs or caregivers.

Without our innate sense of rhythm, how can our musicians and dancers have maintained their supremacy in the Asian circuit? In an obscure hotel bar in Kota Kinabalu, a fabulous Filipino band entertained me.

How can our furniture, houseware, fashion and jewelry be the design leaders in the export industry if the Filipino does not have that sense of style?

Unique

It is our software that gets us places. It is something absolutely unique to us, a cultural quality that sets us apart from other people in the world.

Our software gives us national identity, pride of nation. It makes us feel good about ourselves.

Feeling good about ourselves is a luxury. Many times, when Filipinos get together, conversation invariably moves toward a litany of national woes, of how the country has been on a downside for decades. Finally, talk shifts to wondering what hope is left for the country.

We could look at our country and our lives more positively in 2006. Let it be the first year that more of us feel good about the Philippines, and there is much to feel good about.

When was the last time you felt good about the Philippines? The forgotten step in our nation-building effort is to feel good about the country, to take pride in our nation. Give it a try.

How can we rebuild a nation that we do not feel good about?

For those who have joined me in the past year's journey to discover Philippine heritage and to feel good 'about the Filipino nation, please accept my sincere gratitude and thanks.

E-mail the author at afvillalon@hotmail.com

Jara and Rubio at Blueroom

RYAN JARA and Ryan Rubio present a collaborative art exhibit at the Blueroom Art Gallery, 1354 Lacuna St. and Apolinario St., Bangkal, Makati City until Jan. 15. In "Underground Floor," Jara and Rubio focus on two serious and opposing subjects: vanity and faith. Call 7510746 or 0929-8153038.

ALFREDO Aquilizan presents his mixed media pieces and canvas works in black and white at The Drawing Room, G/F, Metrotstar Bldg., 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati, until Jan. 11. Call 8976990/7877.

VISUAL ARTS

ARTISTS-TEACHERS and selected Art Informal students are holding

an exhibit of large drawings until Jan. 15, at Art Informal, 277 Connecticut St., East Greenhills, Mandaluyong. Participating Art Informal faculty members are Joel Alonday, Jose Santos III, Erwin Leano, Pamela Yan-Santos, Riel Hilario, Jim Orenco, Tatong Torres, Cathy Lasam, Jojo Ballo, Carlo Saavedra, Vincent Padilla and Gerry Ingco. Art Informal students include Angel Gonzalez, Bob Scott, Ana Varona, Roslind Ng, Bianca Nunag, Stephanie Lopez, Willie Espino and Edward Tan. Call 7258518.

BOSTON GALLERY presents "Alay 9," a comprehensive show of selected paintings, drawings and sculptures by more than 30 contemporary Filipino visual artists until Jan. 12. Participating artists include Leo Abaya, Joel Alonday, Jojo Ballo, Marina Cruz, Tina Fernandez, Dennis Fortozzo, Emmanuel Garibay, Sandra Fable-Geller, Riel Hilario, Cathy Lasam, Erwin Leano, Joana Ledesma, Lea Lim, Ferdie Montemayor, Jim Orenco, Vincent Padilla, Samuel Penaso, Jill Posadas, Ian Quirante, Elmer Roslin, Carlo Saavedra, Jaypee Samson, Jerson Samson, Jose Santos III, Victor Santos, Christian Tamondong, CJ Tanedo, Rodel Tapaya, Juanito Torres, Cris Villanueva Jr. and Pamela Yan. Boston Gallery is at 72 Boston St., Cubao, QC. Call 7229205.

DR. REMMON E. BARBAZA will lecture on "There Where Nothing Happens: The Poetry of Space," in Juan Arellano, on Jan. 21, at the Lopez Museum, G/F, Benpres Bldg., Exchange Rd. cor. Meralco Ave., Pasig City. The lecture coincides with the ongoing exhibit of architect-painter Arellano, "Drawing Space," which runs until April 2006. Call 6312417.

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5) For every successful & valid message sent, participants will earn one raffle entry to the monthly and grand draw. One tape receipt number is equivalent to one entry regardless of size and quantity of EQ product reflected in that receipt. Entries with incomplete information will not be considered as valid entries.

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6) Participants must keep all their tape receipts as proof of purchase. Failure to present the receipt which contains the winning Tape Receipt Number and transaction details will disqualify the winner from claiming the prize.

7) A successful registration, which includes the initial entry is free. For succeeding entries, cost for each successful message sent and received is P 2.50 for Globe, Touch Mobile, Smart, Talk N Text, Addict Mobile, Infinity, and P 2.00 for Sun Cellular subscribers. The same rates apply to erroneous registrations.

8) The winners will be drawn electronically via randomizer. The draw will be held at the JS Unilife Merchandise Inc. office, 31/F Raffles Corporate Centre, Emerald Ave., Pasig City in the presence of JS Unilife Merchandise Inc., DTI, and Direct Image Dimensions representatives.

9) Winners may win only once in each draw. In case a person's name is drawn more than once, he is entitled to the prize of greatest value. Non-winning entries are qualified for the succeeding draws.

10) Winners will receive a call on their mobile phones and will be notified via a registered notification letter.

11) Prizes are transferable.

12) Winners will shoulder the 20% tax on prizes exceeding P10,000. Incidental expenses related to winning and redemption, including but not limited to, travel expenses to claim prize, etc., will be for the account of the winners.

13) All employees of JS Unilife Merchandise Inc., Direct Image Dimensions, Global Wireless Connections and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promo.

14) To receive weekly promo updates, text EQPROMO ON to 2955. For further inquiries text in EQPROMO ASK <your question> to 2955. Same text rates apply.

Promo runs from Oct. 6, 2005 to Jan. 6, 2006. See posters and flyers for more details. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 2356 series of 2005

Draw Dates	Deadline for Texting of Entries	Prizes/Number of Winners
Nov 4, 2005 1st Monthly Draw 5:30pm	Nov 4, 2005 4:59pm	1 winner of P100,000 5 winners of P8,000 each
Dec 2, 2005 2nd Monthly Draw 5:30pm	Dec 2, 2005 4:59pm	1 winner of P100,000 5 winners of P8,000 each 5 winners of P6,000 each
Jan 6, 2006 Grand Draw 5:30pm	Jan 6, 2006 4:59pm	1 winner of P600,000 2 winners of P60,000

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Personal Reflections

The Pope's
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and the
spiritual world

Notable books of 2005

By Lito Zulueta

"MEMORY AND Identity" (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London). Published shortly before Pope John Paul II died last April, the book represents the great church leader's last will and testament. Its remarkable analysis of the erosion of faith in Europe prefigures the papacy of Benedict XVI, who has committed to reviving Catholic civilization in the highly secu-

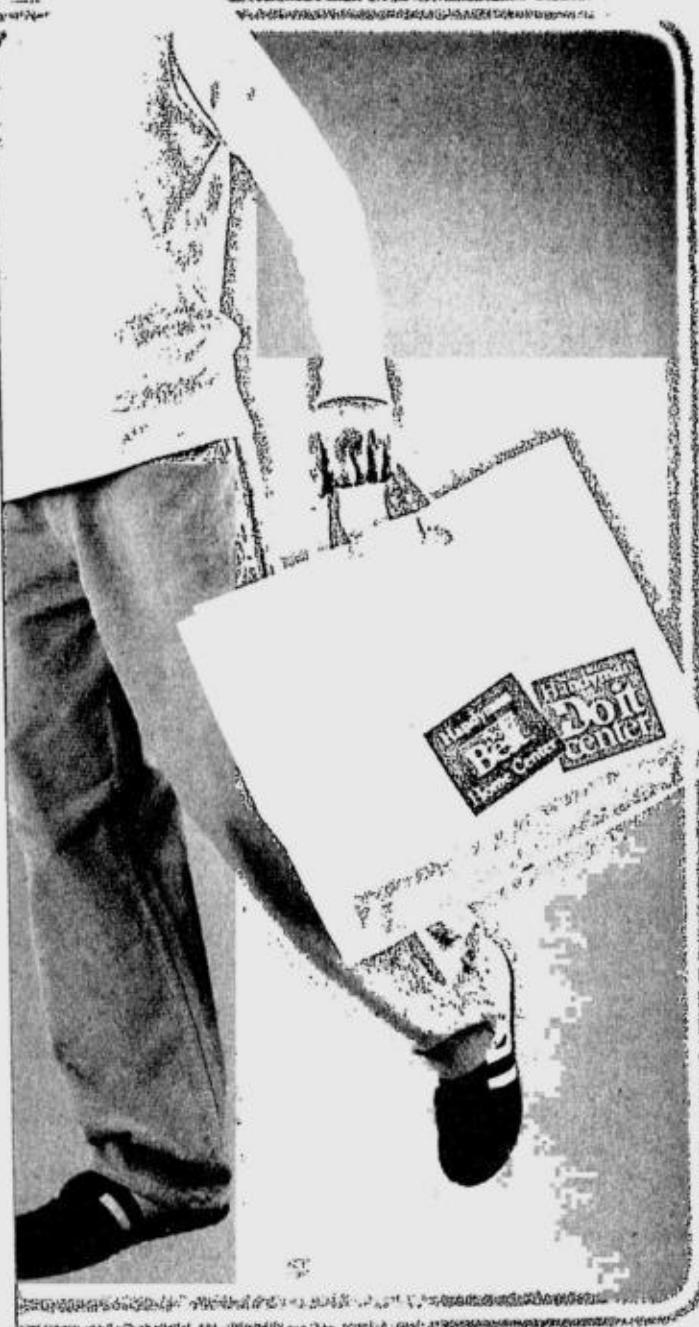
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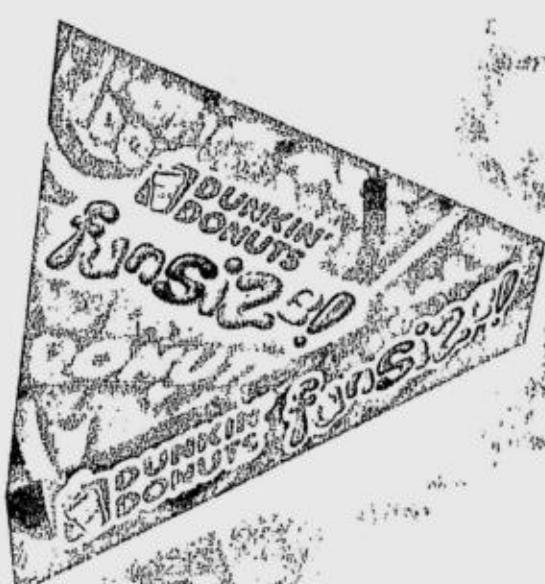
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January reads

"LOUIS VUITTON: THE BIRTH OF Modern Luxury" by Paul-Gerard Pasols is an in-depth portrait of one of the world's best-known luxury brands. It traces the remarkable history of the House of Louis Vuitton, which has been making practical but stylish luggage, handbags and accessories for more than 150 years.

Model Iman resists categorizing people according to ethnicity and delivers a new approach to makeup and skin care in "The Beauty of Color."

Renowned architects and designers present their most representative recent works in "The Ambience of Apartments by Page One."

In 250 glorious photographs, "Wide Angle: National Geographic Greatest Places" documents the beauty and depth of every part of the world. Each chapter is introduced by award-winning cultural writer and critic Ferdinand Protzman, whose essays accent the stunning photographs.

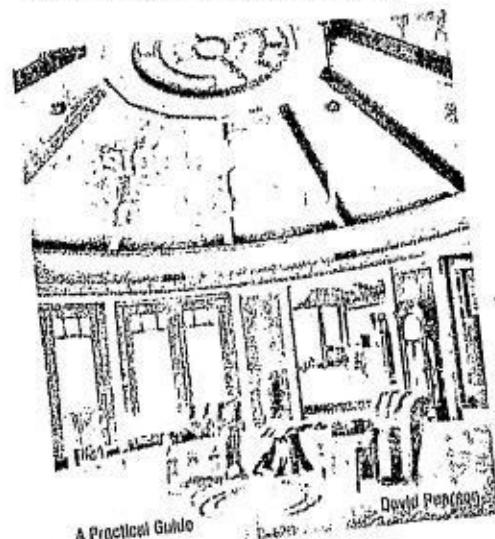
Leonard Maltin's "Disney Poster Book" features more than 100 colorful posters of Disney's classic stars—Mickey, Donald, Goofy and Pluto—as well as Disney's most recent feature animated films from "The Lion King" to "Lilo & Stitch."

"Designing your Natural Home" by David Pearson is a complete guide to creating an eco-home. With useful advice and beautiful color photos, the book takes readers through each step of the process.

Jonathan Ray's "All About Wine" will enable wine enthusiasts or neophytes to approach any bottle with confidence.

In "Japanese Women Don't Get Old or Fat," Naomi Moriyama and William Doyle write about Japanese old-fashioned cooking that has stood the test of time and waistlines for decades. It's the kind of food millions of Japanese women eat everyday to stay healthy, slim and youthful while pursuing an energetic, successful, on-the-go lifestyle.

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In connection with the Philippine Daily Inquirer's 20th anniversary, get a chance to win P3,000 PowerBooks gift certificates and be featured in the Inquirer's pages by writing about the power of reading.

1. In 150 words or less, write about how reading that book has inspired you to see life in a new way. Has it motivated you to start your own business? Challenged you to switch careers? Or changed you for the better?

2. Submit your entry together with a photo of you holding or reading the book at the Customer Service counter of any PowerBooks branch. Photos should be in 4R size, and printed on photo paper or submitted on a CD. Mail to or drop off at PowerBooks, 2/L Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City, or the Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Bldg., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City. Call 6315939.

3. All entries must follow the format: Name, age, date of birth, telephone number, cell phone number, home address, e-mail address, title of book, write-up.



TIM Gerken and Christine Crame give a riveting performance.

Gantimpala pays tribute to F. Sionil José and Nick Joaquin

GANTIMPALA THEATER Foundation (GTF), in cooperation with the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC), presents a twin-bill of English plays, "The God Stealer" and "The Queen's Jewel," based on short stories written by National Artists for Literature F. Sionil José and Nick Joaquin.

"The God Stealer" and "The Queen's Jewel" are the latest of a series of adaptations I have written for GTF based on the works of our National Artists for Literature," says playwright José Victor Torres.

"It has always been tricky to adapt literary works especially by great men and women who have enriched Philippine literature. One must learn not only the story of the writer's work but his voice as well. For a story, no matter how it was written, is part of the writer's soul. Very few also read the stories of Filipino writers today except as assignments in literature classes. I am glad that GTF's National Artist Production Series has made our young audiences curious again about our Artists' works and made them read it again, not out of the need of fulfilling an assignment but for pure leisure."

"The God Stealer" is based on a short story written by F. Sionil José. It is a drama about Sam Christie, an American traveler who accompanies his friend, Philip Lata, a Manila-bred Ifugao, as they visit the latter's sick grandfather who resides in the majestic rice terraces. Conflict and resolution unfolds as one of them learns to appreciate a noble culture while the other claims back his roots.

"The Queen's Jewel," meanwhile, is loosely based on Nick Joaquin's "The Legend of the Virgin's Jewel." It is a tale filled with magic



ROEDER Camañag (Sam Christie), Lailanie Ann Tejico (Ifugao Waitress), Joel Molina (Philip Lata) and Billy Parjan (Sadek)

and mystery as Padre Fernando discovers the presence of a gigantic serpent that keeps a mystical jewel. It also highlights the power of true love and friendship and the miracles of the Virgin de la Naval.

GTF artistic director Tony Espejo says, "Making these short stories into plays is our way of paying tribute to the literary legacies of our National Artists."

"The God Stealer" cast include Roeder Camañag (Sam Christie), Wowie de Guzman/Joel Molina (alternately portraying Philip Lata), Billy Parjan (Sadek), Dante Balois/Ces Aldaba (alternately portraying Apo Lawigang), Perry Dizon (Apo Lakay/Mumbaki), Penny Mervic Gallido (Bangan) and Ace Urieta (Bugar).

For "The Queen's Jewel," the performers are Roeder Camañag (Padre Fernando), Ces Aldaba (Padre Perez), Michael King Urieta (Antonio), Joel Molina (Lakan), Lani Tapia (Babaylan), and Kimberly Diaz/Val Roxas (alternately portraying Mira-Nila).

Providing Espejo and Torres artistic and production support are Joey Nombres (lights designer), Sonny Aniceto (set designer), Christopher Cervantes (choreographer), Jorge Cabullo (costume designer/production manager), Adrian Agcaoili (assistant director/speech coach) and Ruby Solmerano (stage manager).

Performances are Jan. 14 (10 a.m./2 p.m., SM South Mall, Las Piñas City); Jan. 15-17 (outreach show in La Union); Jan. 20-22 (10 a.m./2 p.m., AFP Theater, Quezon City); Jan. 23-26 (outreach show in Urdaneta City); Jan. 28-29 (10 a.m./2 p.m., JCS Auditorium, Paco, Manila); Jan. 30-Feb. 7 (outreach show in Isabela and Tuguegarao); and Feb. 10-12 (10 a.m./2 p.m., AFP Theater, Quezon City).

For tickets, sponsorship and queries for outreach tours, call 8995745 or 8963503.



MICHAEL King Urieta (Antonio) and Camañag (Padre Fernando)



METRO Manila Development Authority Chairman Bayani Fernando and Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando watch the show

regarded as the father of the city's shoe industry.

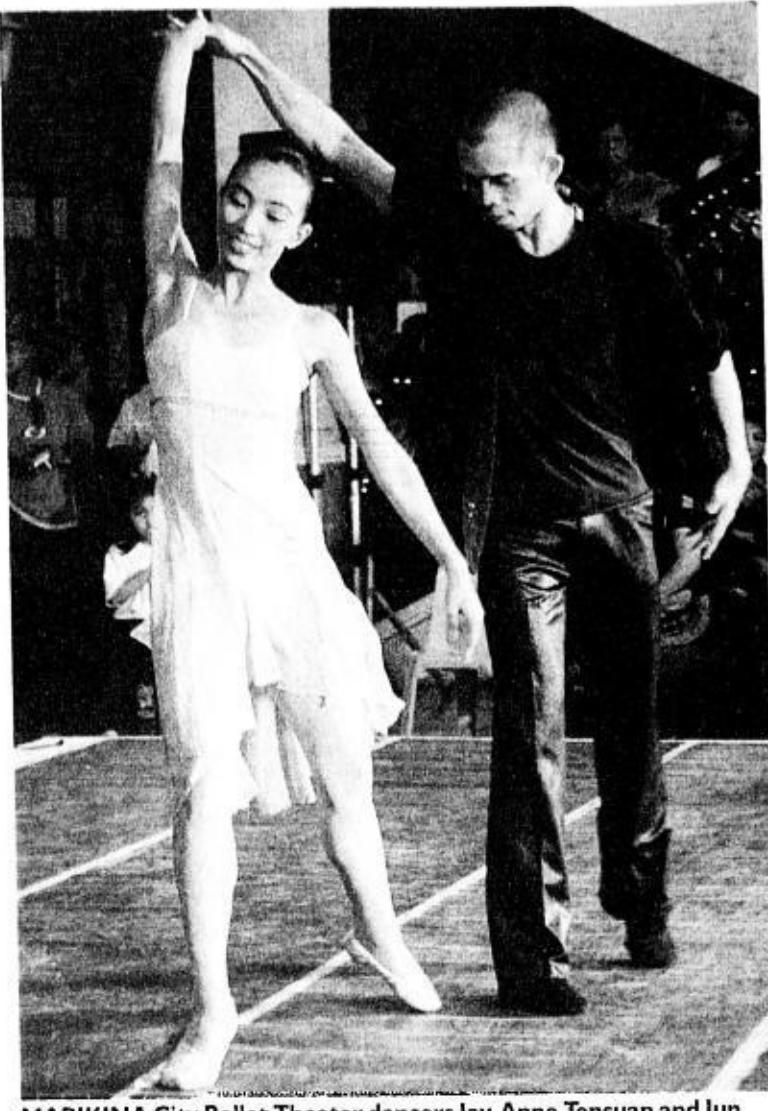
In his brief remarks, CCP artistic director Fernando Josef, a resident of Marikina, paid tribute to the city's shoemakers who inspired the revival of its arts and culture. He said the program would rekindle the love for local music and dances created by Filipino artists.

The program was a complete departure from the usual, said Fernando, that usually consisted of musical numbers followed by a *salu-salo*. According to Irene Rada, who emceed the presentation, the program, consisting of music and dance numbers, was enriching. The Makiling Ensemble composed of Diwa de Leon, Otto Hernandez, David Sicam, Evan Britanico and Wed Lodriga played numbers that underscored the group's ability to fuse diverse styles from the Philippines and other countries.

The program featured, among others, "Balse T'boli" which combined waltz with the pentatonic scale of the T'boli; "Sinulimay" that incorporated the rhythm of Singkil and the sound of the violin, and danced by Tim Gerken, a Filipino-German practitioner of Chinese martial arts; "Bakit Hindi," a modern piece which fused rock, reggae and Spanish music, danced by Christine Crame, a former dancer of Ballet Philippines, with Gerken; the "Hegalong," which introduced the music of the indigenous two-stringed lute, danced by Biag Gaon, a graduate of the Philippine High School for the Arts; and "Spanish Dancer" which mimicked the things a dancer did.

Violinist Merjohn Lingad Lagaya and pianist Glenn Lemen collaborated in Ernani Cuenco's "Kalesa" and George Canseco's "Ikaw."

The Marikina City Ballet, founded by Victor Ursabia, presented "Shoemaker," inspired by the city's shoemakers and extolling the virtues of



MARIKINA City Ballet Theater dancers Jay-Anne Tensuan and Jun Saagundo perform "Shoemakers."

The city's
shoemakers
inspired
the current
revival
of Marikina's
arts
and culture

hard work and diligence.

Enrico Labayen's choreography of "Shoes in Silence," danced by Bobi Superales, explored movements using the *bakya*. Labayen said the residents', especially the shoemakers', exposure to arts and culture would sharpen their creative sensibility which would eventually be reflected in their work.

Ursabia, on the other hand, said efforts had been made to expose residents to the art of the dance, with basketball courts of some barangay being used as venues for these events.

Marikina recently made a bid to host the 2007 Asian Arts Festival. The city is a member of the Asian Network of Major Cities.

The program was capped by "Sinulog," a Visayan festival.

World-renowned Japanese drummers in Manila

IN CELEBRATION OF THE friendship between the Philippines and Japan, the Japan Foundation-Manila and Philippine Airlines present the first-ever Philippine tour of the world-renowned Yamato: The Drummers of Japan.

The series of performances begins at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) on Jan. 11. Other concerts are as follows: PETA Theater Center, Jan. 12; Riverbanks Center Amphitheater, Marikina City, Jan. 13; and Ayala Center, Cebu City, Jan. 14.

"We put our very souls into these unusual instruments, whose sound stir the hearts of people everywhere, and our performances are infused with the idea that the drumbeat, like the heartbeat, is the very pulse of life," he explains.

Since its formation, the Wadaiko Yamato drummers have played to more than a million people in over 20 different countries in Europe, North and South America, and all over Asia, as well as numerous audiences in its native Japan. They recently concluded their highly successful World Tour 2005, dubbed "Kami-nari" (Thunder).

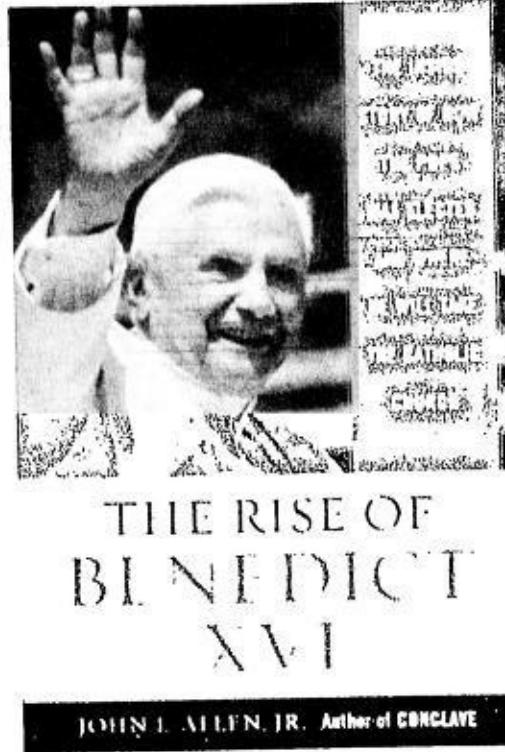
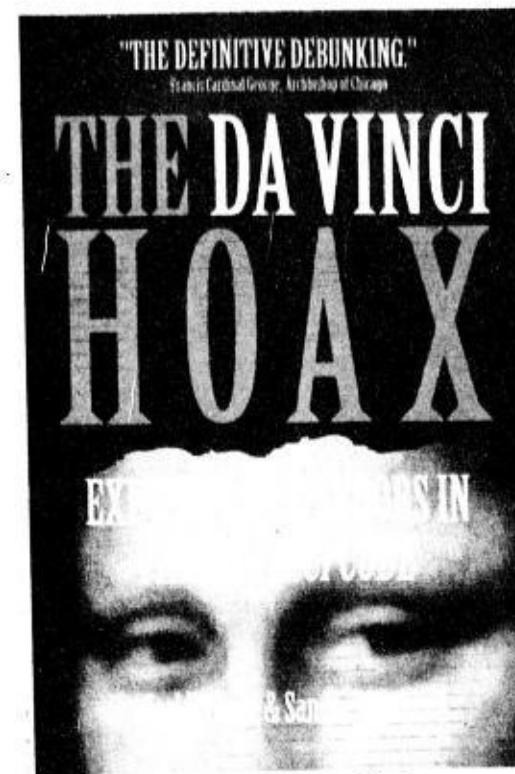
The Wadaiko Yamato Philippine tour, which serves as the official opening event of the 2006 Philippines-Japan Friendship Year, also marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan.

Call The Japan Foundation at 8116155 to 58.



YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan

LIFESTYLE



Notable books of 2005

From page D1

lar continent.

"The Legacy of Pope John Paul II: Images and Memories" (Ignatius Press). Pope Benedict XVI, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, gives a fond tribute to his predecessor.

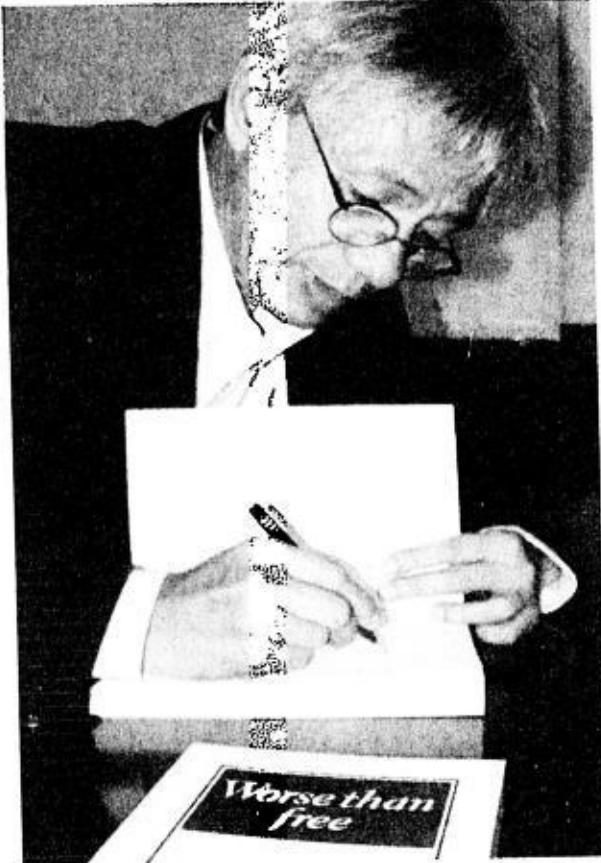
Other notable books about the papal transition are John Allen's "The Rise of Benedict XVI" (Doubleday), Fr. Andrew Greeley's "The Making of the Pope 2005" (Little, Brown); Peggy Noonan's well-written "John Paul the Great" (Viking); and Dominican Fr. Aidan Nichols' "The Theology of Joseph Ratzinger" (T&T Clark), which has been reissued with a new introduction and authoritatively provides readers an entry into the mind of one of the most intellectually rigorous popes ever.

"The Da Vinci Hoax" (Philippine reprint by Jesuit Communications). The novel by Dan Brown, whether or not it has literary and historical merits, should be on this notable list as it continues to be a bestseller worldwide. Its controversial claims, however, have been put more and more in doubt by authoritative books like this, written by Catholic journalist Carl Olson and medieval history expert Sandra Miesel. Considering that Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks have adapted the novel into a much-anticipated movie, the debate on "Da Vinci Code" is bound to rage on this year.

"The Sea" (Picador). Irish writer John Banville's moody Man Booker-winning novel about an art historian forced to come to grips with the wages of his personal relations since childhood, is gripping and beautifully written.

"Never Let Me Go" (Faber and Faber). Kazuo Ishiguro's Man Booker runner-up was probably the year's most surprising novel. The chronicler of historical displacement, the Japanese-British Ishiguro, author of "Remains of the Day" (about a butler in pre-Second World War England) and "When We Were Orphans" (about a detective in Shanghai during the war), now trains his pen at the future. What he has produced is a "Brave New World" in British politesse.

"A Long Long Way" (Faber and Faber). Also a Booker runner-up, Irish



Key fiction works are by John Banville, Sebastian Barry and Kazuo Ishiguro. Kerima Polotan returns

PRESS critic Vergel Santos

playwright Sebastian Barry's novel is war fiction at its finest, an interesting account of the Irish resistance while Irish soldiers join the Allied cause, including England's, against the Germans during the Great War.

"Ghost Wars" (Penguin). The Pulitzer-winning work by Steve Coll shows American miscalculations and even depredations in the so-called war on terrorism.

Other notable non-fiction: "The World is Flat" by Thomas Friedman (a report on globalization and the age of information); "Teacher Man" by Frank McCourt (about the author's teaching experience); "The City of Fallen Angels" by John Berendt (about a fire in Venice by the author of "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil"); and "The Lost Painting" by Jonathan Harr (about a missing Caravaggio masterpiece).

"Never Let Me Go" (Faber and Faber). Kazuo Ishiguro's Man Booker runner-up was probably the year's most surprising novel. The chronicler of historical displacement, the Japanese-British Ishiguro, author of "Remains of the Day" (about a butler in pre-Second World War England) and "When We Were Orphans" (about a detective in Shanghai during the war), now trains his pen at the future. What he has produced is a "Brave New World" in British politesse.

"A Long Long Way" (Faber and Faber). Also a Booker runner-up, Irish

tyr's Testimony and other Affirmations" (Ateneo Press). The collections of essays show that fiction master Gregorio Brillantes is equally masterful in the essay form.

"The True and the Plain" (UP Press). Kerima Polotan's collection of personal essays originally published in the defunct Focus magazine is perhaps the best-kept secret of 2005, released without much fanfare in keeping with the writer's severe and rather protracted post-1986 reclusive mood. The writings display the best of Polotan: acerbic, trenchant, but also poignant.

"Ubod" (National Commission for Culture and the Arts). The chapbook series, a project of the NCCA National Committee on Literary Arts, features first-time authors across the country and across several languages. The works by the 40 or so young authors point to the future of Philippine literature.

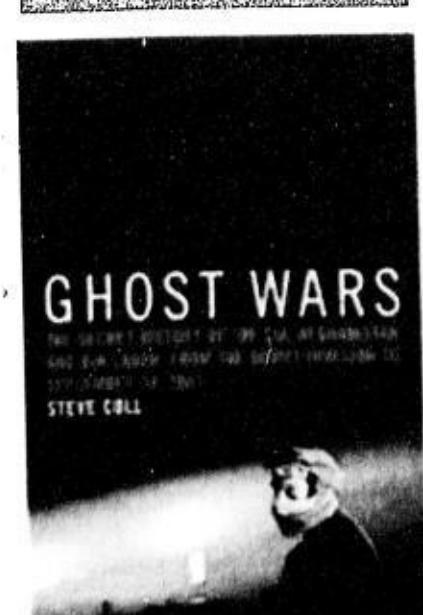
"History of the Bisayan People, Vol. III" (UST Publishing House). Without a doubt the biggest development in historical publishing in recent years is this publication series on Jesuit missionary Pedro Chirino's 17th-century manuscript, which gives historians and researchers a rare view of the Philippine islands and their people at the Spanish contact.

Ironically, the translation and annotation are by historians from rival orders—the American Franciscan Cantius Kobak and the Spanish Dominican Lucio Gutierrez.

"My Fair Maladies" (Milliflores). Edited by Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo, this anthology gathers personal essays by different Filipino writers, including Fil-Am Joel B. Tan, on their most intractable ailments and neuroses.

"The Last Full Moon: Lessons on My Life" (UP Press and GCF Books). Gilda Cordero Fernando collects her personal essays in a volume that celebrates the life and times of a key figure in Philippine letters.

"The Chronicles of Interesting Times" (Anvil) and "The Cardinal's Sins, the General's Cross, the Mar-



dalgo, this anthology gathers personal essays by different Filipino writers, including Fil-Am Joel B. Tan, on their most intractable ailments and neuroses.

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Tuition fee includes ingredients, manual, aprons, chef's jacket and chef's kit.

For more information call 726-5316 or 412 7792 and ask Rita or Jenny

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

January 7 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (classroom A) B A S I C CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison P1,500

January 7 (Saturday) 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) BROWNIES & BARS by: Heny Sison P1,500

January 7 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) N E W CLASSI DRINKS & VIANDS W/ TORANI by: Chef Jane Paredes, Food Consultant, trained at the Culinary Institute of America Hyde Park, New York and Peter Kump's New York Cooking School "Garden Green Salad w/ Strawberry, Raspberry & Mango Vinaigrette, Tea Smoked Chicken, Spices & Tea, Smoked Pork Belly, Coffee Rubbed Rib-eye steak Cold Beverage, Summer Cyclist, Strawberry Slim, Ice Café Mocha Java, Tea & Fruit Freeze in 3 flavors. Hot Beverage: Vanilla Fun Cappuccino, Toasted Almond Café Mocha, Swedish Coffee Sugar Daddy Latte, P2,500

January 9-11 & 13-14 & 18-20 (Mon-Wed, Fri-Sat & Mon - Fri) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) MASTER IN CAKE DECORATION / BASIC by: Heny Sison. Full participation. P16,000

January 9 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) S I O P A O & M A M I WORKSHOP by: Chef Katherine Sison, restaurateur (Ding Hao & Fat Kat restaurant), caterer and an expert in Chinese cuisine. P2,500

January 10 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE I by: Jacqueline Haessig Alleje, owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet) This class will guide you the principles of healthy nutrition & the nutritional guideline, menu plan & recipes of Phase I of the South Beach Diet Swiss Pinoy Style - the strictest phase of the diet. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P2,500

January 11 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASSI HOLIDAY AFTERMATH RECYCLING by: Chef Sam De Leoz Food Consultant, Stylist, Photographer, Caterer, Food demonstrator and Culinary Competition Events Consultant specializing in Basic & Classical Cookery, International & Asian Cuisine. Now you won't need to dispose of your Noche Buena Treats nor feed them to the dogs. Recycle and resurrect their preparation to simple, easy and appetizing fares. Recipes: Walnuts and Chestnut Salad, Smoked Salmon Pale w/ Leftover Crab Alige, Chinese Jane in Creamy Tomato Nacho Soup, Turkey Fajitas w/ Guacamole and Salsa Dips, Crispy Turkey Adobo Flakes w/ Adobo Glaze and Cilantro Vinaigrette and Pinisalan Lechon. P2,000

January 12 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) B A S I C FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS by: Glenn Remorca. florist designer. Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P2,500

January 12 (Thursday) 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (classroom B) S U S H I CLASS by: Chef Kolchi Kondo, licensed cook from Ehime, Japan and food consultant to various Japanese restaurants. P1,700

January 12 (Thursday) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) JAPANESE RICE TOPPING by: Chef Kolchi Kondo. Recipes: Oyakodon (Chicken & Egg on Rice), Gyudon (Beef Bowl), Tendon (Tempura Bowl), Katsudon (Pork Cutlet Bowl), Soboro-don (Minced Chicken & Egg Bowl), Toni Tenyaki, P1,700

January 13 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) DELI SANDWICHES & SALADS by: Chef Jane Paredes. This class will teach you how to prepare & package deli-style sandwiches & salads for take out counter & food to go. Recipes: Assorted Cold Cuts, Chicken Pastarmi, Tuna-Apple, Grilled Eggplant & Cheese, Crabstick Salad, Homemade Potato Salad, Au Jus Dip with Potato Chips, Fresh Fruit Compote and Garden Green Salad. P1,700

January 14 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) DOUGHNUT WORKSHOP by: Chef Jane Paredes. P2,500

January 16 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) FRESH PASTA WORKSHOP by: Chef Giorgio Buccarelli, Master Pizzaiolo & Bansha, food consultant of various Italian restaurants all over Metro Manila, graduated at Culinary Institute, Milan, Italy. Demonstration with student participation. P2,500

January 17 (Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) ARTISANAL BREAD by: Jacqueline Haessig Alleje. Nothing equals the satisfaction of home baked breads. In this class you will learn how to bake savory and sweet quick breads. This class is a must for all who wants to complete their skill of healthy cooking. This class will teach you how to prepare the most delicious healthy breads. And, if you want to turn it into a small business, we teach you how to. Recipes: Whole Wheat Sandwich Bread, Yogurt Graham, Herb-Onion-Bacon Bread, Yogurt Graham Bread, Bread Sticks, Focaccia, Raisin Bread and Mango Tea Bread. P2,500

January 18 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASSI MEDITERRANEAN SALADS, AND SOUPS FOR BACK TO YOUR WAIST WATCHERS PROGRAM by: Chef Sam de Loo. Get back to your waist watchers program with simple Mediterranean salads and soups for the healthy aftermath. "Greek Salad, Asparagus and Orange Salad, Bean, Mushroom and Chorizo Salad, Tabouleh, Spanakopita (Spinach and cheese pie), Spiced Mussel Soup. P2,000

January 19 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) N E W CLASSI EVERYDAY FOOD I by: Chef Ed Quimson, is a seasoned master chef of Spanish origin, creator of Chef Ed's Restaurant at Salcedo Village, Makati City and his latest restaurant FILOS at The Fort, Makati City. He has also lent his expertise to such restaurants as

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ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

Conference celebrates Philippines' rich languages

By Christian V. Esguerra

"PURITA" MEANS PENNIELSS. Say "pamin" if he's gay but won't admit it. It's "badingerzie" if he's finally "out."

The language is "swardspeak." Some call it "gayspeak." And for all its informality, its seemingly shameless adulteration of existing vocabularies, it doesn't bother linguists.

"I don't think we should be disturbed by it," said American language scholar J. Stephen Quakenbush, academic affairs coordinator of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) Philippines.

Like any other language, it should be judged based on its effectiveness among its users, on how well they communicate and express what they need and want because of it, he said.

Yes, swardspeak is difficult to comprehend for a nonspeaker. But this characteristic is precisely what separates a language from a dialect.

"If there's no mutual intelligibility between speakers, they must be using different languages," explained Dr. Emma Castillo, executive secretary of the Linguistics Society of the Philippines.

"If they're just using dialects of the same language, they would still be able to understand each other."

Swardspeak is widely acknowledged as the jargon of Filipino gays and transvestites. It's characterized by words drawn and given a new meaning from just about any term that spring up from pop culture.

It's not clear if its uniqueness in the local gay culture already puts it among the 160-plus known languages in the Philippines.

What's certain is that the country is a very rich resource for anybody wanting to study language. It's ostensibly the reason why we've had swardspeak for more than four decades now.

Language-rich

The Philippines' value as a treasure trove for languages will be brought to a larger audience at the 10th International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics in Palawan on Jan. 17-20.

The convention gathers language scholars every four years to tackle is-

An international

conference
in Manila will
tackle the

Austronesian
linguistic school,
which accounts
for 1,268 languages
in Southeast Asia
and the Pacific,
including Filipino
'swardspeak'



AMERICAN language scholar J. Stephen Quakenbush

log word. A simple change in affixation, he said, can change the meaning "by fine degrees."

Aral (lesson), for example, becomes pag-aralan or aralin (to study).

Indeed, the Philippines has so many languages that can be used as "a linguistic resource for people to express tiny shades of meaning," said Quakenbush who's been in the country for 20 years now.

Sadly, Quakenbush said around 30 of these languages are considered "endangered," largely because of the dwindling number of their speakers. Among these are Itneg and Aeta, he said.

Not swardspeak.

Taking a cue from the English language, a relentless borrower of words from other languages, the flamboyant jargon makes no qualms about picking a word and dressing it up with an entirely different meaning.

Judging by the experience of English, the borrowing in itself would ensure its survival, if not flourishing.

Good thing borrowed names don't demand royalties. For where else can "Julanis Morissette" mean "it's raining"?

Only in the Philippines.

Call 7417416.

The chronicler of Narnia

REVERED FOR HIS WORK on medieval literature and Christian apologetics, Clive Staples Lewis is best loved for his phantasmagorical series of children's stories

collectively known as "The Chronicles of Narnia."

The young Lewis' favorites were "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson and "The Secret Garden" by Frances Hodgson Burnett, classic tales that might have influenced his later works.



C. S. LEWIS

Following the publication of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" in 1950, Lewis quickly wrote six more Narnia books, publishing the final one, "The Last Battle," in 1956.

Although they were not well received at first by critics and reviewers, the books gained popularity through word of mouth. The "Narnia" books have since sold more than 100 million copies and are among the most beloved books of classic children's literature.

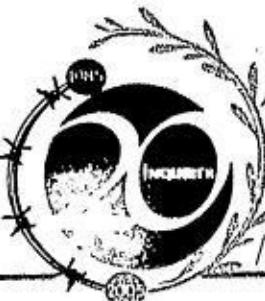
The books are available at Power Books.

ENTERTAINMENT/A2-1

Sharon Cuneta mega hit in pre-Christmas concert in Dubai

NEWS/A3

Charm offensive launched by female soldiers at Metro airports

**NEWS/A5**

Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, first Supreme Court woman justice, dies at 92

WORLD/A9

China's economy grew by 9.8% in '05 confounding forecasts

Widows of 3 brods who died on Christmas: Cop did it

By Luige A. del Puerto

THREE WIDOWS MARRIED TO THREE brothers who all died on Christmas Day pleaded for justice when they went to Camp Crame yesterday.

The women were wives of the Jimeno brothers, two of whom were shot dead al-

WIDOWS/A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, January 3, 2006

★★

4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 26

P18

website: www.inq7.net

Peso ascending on 2006's 1st trading day: 52.80 to dollar

By Doris C. Dumla and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IT WAS AN AUSPICIOUS START FOR the peso, Asia's best performing currency last year.

On the first trading day of 2006, the peso broke into the 52:\$1 level for the

first time in almost three years.

The currency, which appreciated by 6 percent against the US dollar in 2005, closed at 52.835 yesterday, marking its strongest finish since the 52.76 on May 26, 2003.

It opened at an intra-day low of 53.02 and firmed up throughout the day to

breach the 53 barrier and close near the day's high of 52.80. It gained 24.5 centavos from last week's finish of 53.08 to the US dollar.

Volume turnout at the Philippine Dealing System, the foreign exchange market, stood at \$382.52 million, more than double Thursday's volume of \$138.63 million.

"The peso is moving in line with market expectation. Sentiment continues to be positive for the peso," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Tetangco said the peso's ascent was fueled by the good fiscal outlook for 2006 and continuing inflows of remittances

from overseas Filipino workers. Corporate demand for the dollar was still thin at this time, he said.

Roland Avante, treasurer at China-trust Commercial Bank Philippines, said large OFW remittances were recorded during the long weekend.

PESO/A13

Gov't asserts GIs' custody

Romulo spells out firm RP position on explosive legal issue



VIEW FROM THE TOP: President Arroyo with husband Mike Arroyo (partly hidden) takes in the sweeping vista of ricefields in Sagada, Mt. Province, at the end of her 6-day holiday. She also inaugurated the P17.3-M Nangonagan-Aguid farm-to-market road, part of the Halsema Highway. EDWIN BACASMAS

GMA announces P35-B subsidy for food

By Desree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
in Manila

SAGADA, MT. PROVINCE—ON her first working day of the new year, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the release of P35 billion in government savings to subsidize selected food items and

finance projects for the poor.

"I want to declare to you we will pursue the fight against poverty, hunger and unemployment," she told national and local government officials and residents at the St. Mary's High School quadrangle here.

At a press conference here, Ms Arroyo asked Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to tell re-

porters about her program to keep prices at P18 per kilogram for rice and P4.50 per pack for noodles.

"We have other things in store for you, like those on rice and noodles. Mike, you may want to tell them about our program for rice and noodles. It's P18 (per kilogram for rice) and P4.50 (for noodles)," said Ms Arroyo.

Asked if this meant the govern-

ment would start subsidizing food, the President and Defensor said "yes."

"This is dedicated to our poorest communities," said Defensor.

In Manila, Trade Secretary Peter Favila denied any government plan to subsidize budget noodles and rice sold in all groceries and markets nationwide.

GMA ANNOUNCES/A6

Drug Enforcement Office (RDEO) of the National Capital Region and is now with the Civil Security Group at Camp Crame, is the subject of an investigation, according to a Calabarzon police official.

The Calabarzon police official, who asked not to be identified, said Gingoyon accused Barcena of being behind the strafing of his house in Bacoor, Cavite, about three years ago.

SENIOR/A4

Senior cop questioned in Piatco judge's killing

By Marlon Ramos,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Armand N. Nocum

A SENIOR POLICE OFFICIAL WHO figured in a dispute with slain Judge Henrick Gingoyon three years ago has been summoned by investigators to answer questions on the ambush-slaying of the Pasay City judge last Saturday.

Senior Supt. Manuel Barcena, who formerly headed the Regional

Not only for dogs, 2006 is also Year of the Turtle

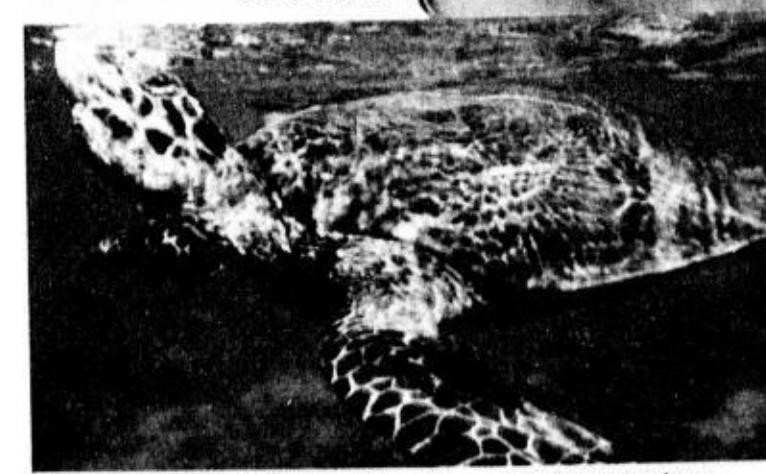
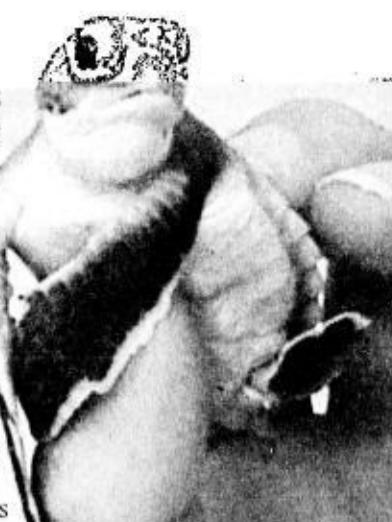
By Blanche S. Rivera

THE UNITED NATIONS HAS declared 2006 the Year of the Turtle in an effort to save the gentle species.

Twenty-five countries in the Indian Ocean Southeast Asian (IOSEA) region, including the Philippines, have signed a memorandum of understanding dedicating 2006 to the protection of sea turtles, known locally as *pawikan*.

"The conference represents

NOT ONLY/A13



HATCHLINGS (top) face predators the moment they are born. (Above) Turtles spend most of their lives out at sea.

NEWS BEHIND THE BIG NEWS

Covering the biggest bang of the 20th century

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

LAMBERTO "BERT" BASA WAS THE INQUIRER's correspondent in Pampanga province in 1991 when Mt. Pinatubo roused itself from a sleep of more than 600 years.

Being more of a photographer than a reporter, Basa was uncomfortable about being assigned to report on what would prove to be one of the worst volcanic eruptions of the 20th century.

HERE COMES THE BIG ONE: 2 photographers run for their lives during the first salvo of Mt. Pinatubo on June 15, 1991. The photo was taken by INQUIRER's Boy Cabrido about 2 km from the volcano's crater in Botolan, Zambales.



POI PHOTO

POI

COVERING/A13

JOANIE BAJMENTHAL AND CLAUDIA TOWNSEND/CONTRIBUTORS

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/01/03/06

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hilago/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laog	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tugaya	Partly Cloudy	Zambanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Garci: Truth may be found in ERs

By Michael Lim Ubac

FORMER ELECTION COMMISSIONER VIRGILIO Garcillano says the only way out the leadership crisis afflicting the country is for President Macapagal-Arroyo to agree to an examination of contested election returns, a move also supported by one of the chief executive's staunchest allies in Congress.

"If we need to go down to the ERs, then so be it," Garcillano said in a recent telephone interview with the INQUIRER. "The truth is in the ERs. Let's put an end to this crisis."

He said Ms Arroyo and her officials should not resort to technical-

ies to block the opening of the election returns as it would only be through that process that the country could finally attain closure on the issue and be able to move on.

Garcillano observed that the lingering political crisis was erod-

ing the country's democratic institutions and holding back economic development and progress.

Like Garcillano, Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. believes the truth lies in the election returns and called, in a recent interview, even for an unofficial recount of the votes cast in the 2004 presidential election.

The political opposition has accused Ms Arroyo of stealing the election from the late actor and opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr.

The Surigao del Sur congressman told the INQUIRER that since the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) was currently hear-

ing the election protest lodged by opposition vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda against Vice President Noli de Castro, it should at the same time tally the votes cast for the presidency.

"One way to know the truth is to tally the votes of the president unofficially. Otherwise, we can never achieve closure if we will just rely on congressional hearings. If we likewise tally the votes for president, then nobody can argue with figures," said Pichay.

Pressed for specifics, the lawmaker said that Romulo Macalintal, De Castro's legal counsel in PET proceedings, was also Ms Arroyo's election lawyer and could very well look out for the President's interest in the recount.

Pichay said he had yet to consult Ms Arroyo about his proposal.

He acknowledged that the PET could not be expected to sanction the process officially as it had already dismissed Poe's electoral protest following his death in December 2004.

"But if they really want closure, let's do it. It's unofficial but we will find out the truth," he said.

"The opposition keeps on claiming that the PET decision in effect deprived the nation of the opportunity to settle the question about the

legitimacy of Ms Arroyo's government. Since the votes cast for presidential candidates can be found on the same Certificates of Canvass, Statements of Votes and Election Returns, then by all means, let's also count the votes for president," said Pichay.

The result of the final tally should be presented to the public and respected by all, he added.

Pichay noted that the provinces identified by Legarda as the places where cheating allegedly occurred were the same ones cited in Congress by opposition lawmakers during the national canvassing of votes in June 2005.

No-el dubbed 'prescription to perdition'

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE PROPOSED CANCELLATION OF THE 2007 national and local elections will plunge the country into its worst political turmoil ever, a senior administration lawmaker warned yesterday.

Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco said the Consultative Commission's no-election proposal was indecent, immoral, improper and a "prescription to perdition" that should be scrapped.

He scored the ConCom for coming up with the proposal, saying he himself would campaign against amending the 1987 Constitution if Congress agreed to no-el.

"That proposal is a sure prescription to perdition. It will not only spell the demise of democracy but will also spawn the seeds of autocracy and dictatorship," Cuenco said.

"Those who voted for this provision are certainly lost in their analyses and translation of the political fundamentals now obtaining at this crucial juncture of the nation's history, and to borrow a familiar phrase: 'lost in transition,'" he said.

Cuenco said Charter change "should not be used as a medium to perpetuate those in power."

"The national interest must be upheld and personal interests and motivations must be sacrificed for the common weal. This country is still hobbled by many crises and we cannot afford to add more explosiveness into a very fragile and volatile political situation," he said.

"If this highly questionable provision will not be rejected by the current members of Congress, I will be one of those who will strongly campaign for the rejection of all the proposed amendments to the Constitution," he said.

Cuenco said the ConCom's rationale for the proposal—that it would be difficult to survive the transition to a parliamentary form of government if there were a change in leaders—was "not only myopic but evidently self-serving."

"And if that isn't a bribe, I do not know what could be labeled a bribe. It is such a shame that a former UP [University of the Philippines] president would stoop so low to even have the gall to defend such dishonorable provision," Cuenco said, referring to ConCom chair Jose Abueva.

With the current political crisis and the no-el proposal, Cuenco said he saw "not only greater uncertainties but also a much larger vortex for crises, both economic and political" in the year ahead.

"Congress has a duty to forestall and avert unnecessary evils that will add more fuel to the fires that spell greater ills for our people," he said.

"2006 should be a year for relief from the myriad troubles of 2005. We must all ensure that we are prepared to exorcise the many more demons lurking behind the corridors of power, and deny them any possible avenue to wreak havoc on our ailing country," he said.

Customs chief vows hands-on management

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NEW COMMISSIONER OF the Bureau of Customs yesterday vowed to take an active role in the revenue agency's operations, saying he would directly supervise all of its personnel down to the messenger, a position he himself used to occupy.

Napoleon Morales, whose controversial appointment drew flak because of allegations linking him to smuggling, also sought the support of his colleagues to enable the bureau to meet its collection target, citing teamwork as the key to success.

"To ensure the effective implementation of our programs, I am taking a hands-on management



PRESIDENT Arroyo was alarmed by the sight of shanties sprouting on the famed Banaue rice terraces and vowed to relocate the informal settlers.

PDI PHOTO

Banaue squatters alarm GMA

SQUATTERS HAVE STARTED COLONIZING the world-famous Banaue rice terraces in the northern Philippines, with potentially disastrous consequences for one of the country's top tourist draws, President Macapagal-Arroyo said on Monday. (See related story on Page A14)

The President visited the world-famous tourist spot in the Cordillera mountain range over the weekend and was alarmed by the mushrooming number of houses put up by informal settlers that blocked the view of the centuries-old man-made wonder, a Malacanang statement said.

Unless stopped, the building binge would persist "until the view of the majestic terraces

are completely blocked from sight," the President said.

Ms Arroyo said she would set up a resettlement site in the region to keep the squatters out of the terraced mountain slopes, which were built and tended by the local mountain tribes and watered by mountain streams.

Regional tourism chief Purificacion Molintas told the President the number of squatters in the area had doubled.

Some 24 million people, or nearly 30 percent of the population, now live in upland areas, putting tremendous pressure on the dwindling forest cover, according to studies released last year by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources. AFP

ing involved in smuggling.

"There is no pending case against me. I hope they will give me a chance to show what I can do and judge me based on what I accomplished," Morales said.

Yesterday, he noted that the BOC was facing intense pressure to meet its increased collection target of P192 billion, which was why the bureau's employees should step up their act. (See related story in Business, Page B1)

"The complaint involved a misdeclared corn starch shipment that was released and levied the wrong amount in taxes, allegedly to the detriment of the government.

But in a recent interview with the INQUIRER, Morales denied be-

ing involved in smuggling.

THE COUNTRY'S MAJOR RELIGIOUS congregations are not about to let go of the unresolved questions over the legitimacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

The Association of Major Religious Superiors (AMRSP) is set to meet with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), seeking, among other goals, to consolidate their positions on the political crisis triggered by Ms Arroyo's alleged manipulation of the 2004 election results.

The gathering is set on Jan. 23 at the Pope Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila where the CBCP will also have its annual plenary assembly five days later.

"We're not giving up on the issue. We can't move forward until we find closure," Bro. Manuel de Leon, AMRSP vice chair and head of the Marist Brothers of the Philippines, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

But consolidating the positions of the AMRSP and the CBCP might not be that easy. Christian V. Esguerra and Christine O. Avendaño

The AMRSP move came as Malacafang renewed its call for political leaders, including those in the opposition, to join President Macapagal-Arroyo in her national government of unity.

"All leaders who are for the national interest are welcome aboard," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said. "But we can't be held hostage by those who insist on bickering and slowing down the train of progress."

In a closed-door meeting at the Ateneo University in November, the AMRSP, representing 353 congregations, resolved it would not "surrender to apathy." The group then noted the prevailing sentiment not to make the President accountable for her alleged cheating anymore for a seeming lack of a better successor.

"We're not giving up on the issue. We can't move forward until we find closure," Bro. Manuel de Leon, AMRSP vice chair and head of the Marist Brothers of the Philippines, told the INQUIRER yesterday.



NEW CUSTOMS Commissioner Napoleon Morales (right) is congratulated by former bureau OIC Alexander Arevalo while Finance Secretary Margarito Teves looks on.

REM ZAMORA



ROGER MARGALLO

SOFTER, prettier, friendlier security force eases travelers' apprehensions at the Naia.

Pretty in fatigues at airports

By Nikko Dizon

PRETTIER, FRIENDLIER AND perhaps just as effective as their armed male counterparts, 30 unarmed women from the Armed Forces of the Philippines began providing frontline security services at Manila's international and domestic airport terminals yesterday.

The deployment of the unarmed soldiers from the AFP's Women Auxiliary Corps (WAC) is aimed at providing the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and the Manila Domestic Airport with a friendlier and less intimidating atmosphere even amid stringent security measures, accord-

ing to Brig. Gen. Angel Atutubo (ret.), the Manila International Airport Authority's assistant general manager for security and emergency services.

Unlike male soldiers who often look nasty and ready for combat, women soldiers come off as friendlier to passengers, even when they are in military uniform, Atutubo said.

Armed soldiers are deployed at the airports during times of heightened alert, such as the holiday season.

Yesterday, the authorities decided to pull out the armed Marines and replace them with the women soldiers, who are tasked with providing security visibility by conducting foot

patrols in the capital's three airport terminals.

Atutubo said the soldiers' presence could deter luggage theft, especially during peak hours at the airports as well as discourage mulcters and pickpockets from preying on passengers.

"The AFP also wants to show that our soldiers are not only for combat but they could also render public service," Atutubo said.

The deployment of the women soldiers at the airport terminals is a joint project of the AFP and the MIAA, as part of the airport authority's recently relaunched SMILE program aimed at promoting friendliness and hospitality starting at the airport.

SuperFerry passenger rescued off Bataan

FISHERMEN RESCUED ON NEW Year's Eve a 38-year-old man who reportedly jumped off an interisland ferry that was making its way to Iloilo from Manila, the Philippine Coast Guard reported.

The man, identified as Rafael Arebalo of Fairview, Quezon City, was found drifting in the sea off Lamasan, Bataan.

According to the PCG, Arebalo jumped off the SuperFerry 16 on Friday while the boat was near Sangley Point, Cavite. The motive for his action was unclear.

On Saturday afternoon, the crew of the fishing boat Nasa spotted Arebalo in the sea and hauled him on board. He was later turned over to the PCG

detachment in Lamasan.

PCG investigation revealed that Arebalo was traveling under the name of his brother-in-law, Eliseo Portacion, who had bought his ticket in Manila.

Arebalo is expected to be brought to the PCG's National Capital Region office for further investigation.

Leila B. Salaverria

Immigration exceeds target

AFTER THE CONTROVERSIES IT WAS EMBOILED IN DURING THE PAST MONTHS, THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AT LEAST ENDED 2005 ON A POSITIVE NOTE WHEN IT CAME TO ITS EARNINGS.

By the end of November, the BI had surpassed its 2005 target collection of P1.120 billion, earning a total of P1.126 billion and maintaining itself in the "billionaire's club" of government agencies for the fifth straight year.

Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said the bureau's collection during the 11-month period was also P114.7 million higher than its earnings in the same period in 2004.

The BI expects to receive more collections

from various other international ports nationwide and these, along with collections for December, will drive up its income further, according to BI finance chief Elvira Presado.

"Our conservative estimate is that our total collection for the year could reach P1.2 billion, or P80 million more than our assigned target for 2005," Presado said in a statement.

The bulk of the bureau's earnings comes from visa extension fees, and fines and penalties imposed on overstaying and deported aliens. It also earns money from approving visas for foreigners applying for resident and immigrant status.

Leila B. Salaverria

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Corrections

YESTERDAY'S front-page story—"Senate kept secret votes rejecting US bases"—misstated that former Sen. Jose W. Diokno was in the gallery as senators cast and explained their votes on the US bases issue in 1991. It was former Sen. Lorenzo Tañada who was present during the voting. Diokno died in 1987 while Tañada passed away in May 1992.

IN THE DEC. 31 issue, a Saturday Special article on Page A3-2—"Retrospective honors Pete Lacaba"—misstated that Ricky Davao had never acted in a movie with a script by Pete Lacaba. Davao played a supporting role in Lacaba's "Eskapo: The Sergeant Osmeña-Geny Lopez Story."

IN THE SAME article, the names of two visual artists were misstated. They were Gelacio Guillermo—not Horacio Guillermo—and Ana Achacoso—not Achocoso.

IN THE DEC. 30 issue, a front-page story—"Centenarian recalls Man from Calamba"—misstated that the first Philippine Republic was established on June 12, 1898. The correct date was Jan. 23, 1899. On June 12, 1898, Emilio Aguinaldo declared Philippine independence.

According to the same story, Aguinaldo named Mariano Ponce diplomatic representative to Japan after proclaiming the republic. Ponce was named diplomatic agent to Japan in 1898, after the declaration of independence but before the inauguration of the Republic in 1899.

Gingoyon wanted to die with untarnished name

By Jhunnex Napallacan,
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—IN THE END, SLAIN JUDGE Henrick Gingoyon got what he had always wished for—an untarnished name and reputation for integrity up to the time of his death.

A source close to the family said that Gingoyon's siblings were taking his death calmly because they knew that the judge's goal in life was fulfilled.

Gingoyon, a former human rights lawyer, wanted to help the country by dispensing fair justice while keeping his name unblemished and his integrity and credibility intact.

"He worried that his name would be tarnished. He showed displeasure when [any] colleague in the judiciary was being questioned. That's why, if he had to go, he wanted to keep his integrity intact because he really

valued his name," the source said.

The source recalled being on a beach in Talisay City with the judge when Gingoyon was still a prosecutor and watching a man who was unable to walk being assisted by two persons.

The source said Gingoyon told him that he did not want to be an invalid because he wanted to serve the country until the last moments of his life.

"I think he was able to fulfill that because he really died for not compromising his principles. He stood up to defend the justice system of the country," the source said.

Gingoyon's ailing mother, Conchita, 84, was told of her son's death on Sunday during an emotional meeting with the rest of Gingoyon family on Urgello Street in Barangay Sambag Uno here.

One of Conchita's grandchildren who asked not to be named said her lola did not want to talk about her son's death.

Senior cop . . .

From page A1

The source said Gingoyon had filed an affidavit on the incident with the special operations division of the National Bureau of Investigation.

In the affidavit, "Gingoyon clearly said it was Barcena who could be behind the strafing of his house in 2002," the source said.

The source said Gingoyon's house was shot at by armed assailants in a maroon Nissan Sentra at about 2:20 a.m. on March 12, 2002.

Reached through his mobile phone yesterday, Barcena, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1983, refused to be interviewed over the phone and insisted that this correspondent meet with him personally at his Camp Crame office.

"This case is sensitive so it would be best that we talk face to face," he said.

Barcena refused to confirm that he had been summoned for questioning but admitted to having filed several cases against Gingoyon and that the victim had also filed cases against him.

Barcena said he was also willing to produce the documents pertaining to the cases.

Only person with grudge'

In his four-page NBI affidavit, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, Gingoyon said Barcena was "the only person whom I could say has a grudge against me."

Gingoyon said the bad blood between him and Barcena started when he dismissed the drug charges that the police official had filed against two Chinese nationals who were allegedly caught in a drug buy-bust operation.

He said he had also filed a contempt charge against Barcena after the latter had forcibly taken a car belonging to the Chinese nationals from the custody of the court's sheriff on March 25, 2000. He said Barcena had illegally confiscated the car from the drug suspects.

Barcena, who had then headed the RDEO, and his men received medals of commendation for the arrest of the Chinese.

"But the kery of their buy-bust operation was soon unmasked by (Barcena) himself. During the hearing, they did not only contradict each other, they also contradicted themselves," Gingoyon said in his affidavit.

After acquitting the drug suspects, Gingoyon said as he asked the Philippine National Police to strip Barcena of the awards.

Career in limbo

Gingoyon said Barcena was convicted of contempt on Dec. 12, 2000.

He said Barcena had admitted that because of the cases, the RDEO was dismantled and he faced a string of administrative cases at the National Police Commission.

Gingoyon said the cases put Barcena's career "in limbo."

Also yesterday, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he had ordered the NBI to probe the Gingoyon killing, and in particular to investigate the dispute with Barcena as a possible motive for the killing.

"Well, that seems to be the indicator, that seems to be the first lead because he (Gingoyon) executed an affidavit, although I understand it's not sworn to, against that police official," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez said that although the police could very well investigate the killing, he had ordered the NBI to look into it as well, "considering the importance of the case."

Special security unit

Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban yesterday proposed the creation of a special unit of law enforcers to protect, and investigate the murders of judges in the wake of the killing of Gingoyon.

He said the Supreme Court justices met yesterday and discussed measures to protect the country's judges, including the creation of a special security unit to be patterned after the US Marshal Service, a special bureau under the US Department of Justice, to provide security for judges and when crimes occur, to "make sure that perpetrators are brought to justice."

Panganiban said the high court justices had expressed dismay at "the killing of nine other judges" in the past.

"You know judges are supposed to deliver justice to the people, but when injustice is committed against judges, it's very important that justice be given to them, otherwise how can the judges be expected to give justice to the people if justice to them is not attended to," he told reporters.

Killing justice

The killing of judges is tantamount to "killing justice," the Chief Justice said.

He said it had the effect of "setting back the arms of the law and . . . delaying the rendering of justice in so many other cases pending in the court of that particular judge."

Panganiban said he had formed a panel to study the creation of the proposed security unit that would be similar to the US marshal system which is "dedicated to solving cases against justices and judges, especially cases involving assault on their persons, whether resulting in their death or otherwise."

Malacañang said it was confident that the killing of Gingoyon, the judge who had ordered the government to pay billions of pesos to the Piatco consortium that built the mothballed Naia Terminal 3, would not cause any delay in the opening of Naia 3, even as President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered a swift probe of Gingoyon's murder.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President had been monitoring the Gingoyon case and expected authorities to wrap up the investigation soon.

"She also supports all effective means to accord protection to judges in the performance of their duties, so that justice shall not be assaulted in this manner," Bunye said in a statement.

The Pasay City judge was ambushed on Saturday by two motorcycle-riding gunmen as he was walking home in the town of Ba-

What is really immoral?

We, the Constitutional Consultative Commission, propose a shift to parliamentary-federal government and the liberalization of our economic policies on foreign investments in our economy and natural resources. That is the substance of the report we submitted to the President on December 16, which she has transmitted to Congress.

After much debate among ourselves and nationwide consultations, we submitted a report that Charter changes are needed to address the grave problems facing the country. For this we have been accused of being 'immoral' because of one transitory provision postponing the elections in 2007 to 2010.

But what really is immoral?

It is immoral and unacceptable if we do not change the system of governance that prevents us from effectively addressing:

- the pervasive poverty, unemployment, low income, and homelessness of our people;
- the widening social inequality, injustice, criminality, rebellion, and now terrorism as a local and global threat;
- our severely inadequate public services and infrastructure;
- our weak rule of law, and lack of public accountability in government, the political parties, the private sector, and the media; and
- the widespread graft and corruption in the government and the private sector.

We believe endless political infighting and bickering in our present presidential-unitary system have worsened our problems and made

the country politically unstable and unable to catch up in a region of leap-frogging economies.

Charter change to stop 'authoritarian alternatives'

We seek Charter change both as the vehicle for substantial reforms and as a unifying instrument to blunt violent and authoritarian alternatives from both the Left and Right as 'solutions.' The survival of our constitutional democracy is the real challenge before us.

We implore our leaders and citizens to look at the substance of our proposed amendments to the 1987 Constitution, instead of focusing on one transitory provision.

We have proposed 'No elections in 2007' as a transitory provision for a smooth transition to parliamentary-federal government because the necessary institutions for credible elections might not be in place by then. It would be divisive and costly to the government and the people to hold the elections so soon after the national plebiscite on the proposed constitutional reforms. This is our majority decision.

Our Consultative Commission only recommends changes in the Constitution. It is Congress as a constituent assembly that will make the final proposals to the people.

Above all, our task was to put together proposals for Charter changes that would help transform our political institutions and system of governance. This we have done.

Chairman: Jose V. Abueva

Vice-Chairman: Victor F. Ortega

Secretary General: Lito Monico Lorenzana

Deputy Secretary General: Ma. Romela M. Bengzon

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Carmen N. Pedrosa (Metro Manila)
Pablo P. Garcia (Visayas)
Pedro P. Romualdo (Mindanao)

Floor Leader: Sergio A.F. Apostol

Deputy Floor Leaders: Alfredo E. Abueg, Jr.

Ronald L. Adamat

First woman Supreme Court justice passes away at 92

By Fe Zamora

RETIRED JUSTICE CECILIA MUÑOZ-Palma, the first woman justice of the Supreme Court, passed away at 5:55 p.m. yesterday at St. Luke's Hospital. She was 92.

Palma was rushed to the hospital at about 7 a.m. yesterday after her daughter Pearl found her in a deep stupor.

"Pearl woke her up, but mama did not respond anymore," Ric Cardema, who is married to Palma's eldest daughter Pearl, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Cardema said the feisty woman justice had been hospitalized several times before due to emphysema and asthma, and their complications.

The former Justice's remains will lie in state at the Mt. Carmel Church on Broadway in Quezon City. The funeral will be decided later, Cardema said.

Aside from Pearl, Cardema said, Palma left behind sons Thadeus and Gustave, 15 grandchildren and over a dozen great-grandchildren.

On Nov. 22, the Palma brood had a family reunion to mark her 92nd birthday, Cardema said.

"We thought that she would go anytime," he said.

Her last public appearance was at the Manila Hotel reception and program marking the retirement of Chief Justice Hilario Davide two weeks ago.

Standing ovation

Celing, as friends called her, was always known for her great courage and straight talk.

In 1975, then Justice Secretary Vicente Abad Santos called her "ingrata (ingrate)" after she delivered a speech critical of President Ferdinand Marcos, who had appointed her to the high court two years earlier. Here she demanded a return to the rule of law—at the height of Marcos' martial law rule. Her peers and members of the bar gave this "ingrate" a five-minute standing ovation.

She also went against the tide with a dissenting opinion that paved the way for the release of nationalist and Marcos critic Sen. Jose Diokno, who had been detained for more than 700 days without charges.

Dictator-proof

The battlecry that won her a National Assembly seat in the 1984 Batasang Pambansa elections was "One Marcos cannot stop us all."

In 1986, after the Marcos regime

was ousted, Palma was appointed head of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the "dictator-proof" 1987 Constitution.

Born on Nov. 22, 1913, the St. Scholastica's College high school valedictorian went on to the University of the Philippines for college and law school. She topped the bar exams in 1937 with a 92.6-percent rating.

Palma rose from the local courts to the Court of Appeals; she served on the Supreme Court from Oct. 29, 1973, to Nov. 22, 1978.

Pope Paul VI gave her the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross in 1977. She won the Catholic Mass Media Award and the Sagisag ng Kagitingan Award in 1978, and the Ninoy Aquino Movement Award in Chicago in 1985.

Then President Joseph Estrada appointed her to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office in 1998. Her stint would later be controversial because of allegations that P430 million in PCSO funds were channeled to finance the First Family's pet projects.

Palma vehemently denied the claims, saying that under her chairmanship, the PCSO board had not been Estrada's "rubber stamp." With Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research

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Gov't asserts custody over 4 US Marines

From page A1

implications of the rape case on overall bilateral relations with the US.

"This is an isolated incident and while the case may indeed be a test of some provisions of the VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement), it should not be a test of our time-honored friendship with the United States," Bunye said.

Fighting prosecutor

In Olongapo City, lead state prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni said he was ready to file a motion in court seeking the transfer and detention in Olongapo of the four Americans charged with raping the 22-year-old woman at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1.

Jalandoni told the INQUIRER that the warrants and subsequent arrests would be "assertions" by the court of its jurisdiction over the case and the accused.

The Department of Foreign Affairs formally sought custody of the servicemen on Nov. 16 but the US Embassy has yet to reply to it.

In a statement, Romulo appeared to clarify the statements made by Gonzalez.

Romulo said that "we (the justice and foreign affairs departments) are in full agreement, we

continue to assert that this is an extraordinary case under the VFA and the Philippines should have actual physical custody."

Legal interpretation

Romulo also said the Department of Justice would be the agency that would provide "legal interpretation of our relevant treaty obligations."

He said it was based on the opinion of the DOJ that his department "continues to negotiate for the custody of the suspects."

Romulo explained later in his statement that "any differences between the Philippines and the US on this issue would be settled through diplomacy."

"While we have close relations with many countries, we sometimes have differences on certain specific issues, which we settle through dialogue and diplomacy," he added.

Romulo's statement was silent about the role of the local court on the matter of custody or the weight of the arrest warrants that were expected to be issued against the accused in the next few days.

Negotiate first

Gonzalez earlier told the IN-

QUIRER that the Philippines must first negotiate with the United States to turn over custody of the Americans before arrest warrants could be served.

"We cannot arrest them and break the treaty unilaterally," Gonzalez had said. "That can become an unfriendly act with a country that is aligned with us."

The VFA allows the United States, upon request, to take custody of the accused for the entire length of the trial.

For his part, Jalandoni said the issuance of arrest warrants should not lead to a unilateral abrogation of the VFA.

He said the VFA had a provision stating that the Philippines would have primary jurisdiction over US military personnel who commit offenses while on authorized liberty or pass in the Philippines.

Defending RP dignity

The four US Marines—Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpenter and Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis—were on liberty or rest and recreation when the alleged rape took place.

According to Jalandoni, the rape case was "not only about de-

fending the dignity" of the Filipino woman but "also about asserting the sovereign rights of the Philippines."

If an arrest warrant was issued for the US soldiers' Filipino driver, Timoteo Soriano Jr., and none were issued for the four, Jalandoni said that would smack of discrimination.

"Philippine laws apply to everyone, including foreigners who are accused of crimes here," he said.

No full immunity

Citing a provision in the treaty, he added: "The VFA does not give US personnel conditional or full immunity from the Philippines' laws."

"The US government should follow our procedures," Jalandoni said.

He said he was hopeful about the sense of fairness of US authorities.

On Tuesday, the case is to be referred off among three regional trial courts here. Branch 73 is handled by Judge Renato Dilag, Branch 74 by Judge Ramon Caguioa and Branch 75 by Judge Avelino Lazo.

Lawyering for US?

Gonzalez drew fire from all sides for his statement warning

that arresting the four US Marines could imperil Philippine-US relations.

Opposition lawmakers called on

Gonzalez to immediately resign for

"lawyering" for the Americans,

while a senior administration law-

maker dismissed his view that any

arrest would be an "unfriendly act"

against the United States.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero, Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano scored Gon-

zalez for supposedly giving legal

advice to the accused Americans,

prioritizing their concerns rather

than the country's interests, and al-

legedly deliberately giving a mis-

leading interpretation of the VFA.

House Deputy Majority Leader

Edcel Lagman said upholding

Philippine sovereignty by taking

custody of the accused "cannot be

considered an unfriendly act

against the US," adding that sur-

rendering sovereignty "to a for-

ign power is a reprehensible and

unpatriotic act."

Senators also chided Gonzalez.

"Let the judicial process be com-

pleted. After the issuance of the war-

rents of arrest, then the Philippines

can start negotiating the custody of

the four accused instead of the

Americans taking custody," he said.

Surrender of RP rights

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson also twitted Gonzalez for "prema- turely" yielding the government's right to assert jurisdiction over the four Marines in the absence of any request by the US government to take custody of them.

"It's premature for Gonzalez to just surrender our right to have custody over the accused," he said in a phone interview. With reports from Philip C. Tuba, TJ Burgoonio

Widows of 3 brods who died on Christmas: Cop did it

From page A1

legedly by a Quezon City police officer on Dec. 25. The third brother collapsed and died of a heart attack on learning that his younger brothers had succumbed to gunshot wounds.

With a child in tow, the widows yesterday filed administrative charges of grave misconduct against Senior Insp. Michael Sanchez. This was in addition to the criminal charges of murder filed against Sanchez with the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Saying they were after justice any way they could get it, the widows—Marilou, Regina and Thelma Jimeno—also sought assurances from senior police officials that the police would not coddle one of their own.

"Administrative sanctions are

clearly not enough, but we are pursuing administrative charges as well because we want him to be dismissed from the service," Marilou said.

A referee, an architect

"We don't want cops like him in the police."

Regina's 3-year-old son, EJ, came with his mother.

Marilou's husband, Froilan, a referee in the Philippine Basketball League, and Regina's husband, Arnold, an architect, were riding on scooters along General Luis corner Damong Malit Streets in Quezon City when they collided with a Toyota Revo at 10:55 a.m. on Christmas Day.

"Sanchez and his relatives were in the car."

The Jimenos and Sanchez had

a heated argument. Then the cop took out an M-16 rifle and shot the brothers, police said.

A brother of the Jimenos, Ferdinand, and sister Evangeline brought the two brothers to the hospital.

Told that his brothers did not make it, Ferdinand collapsed and died that same day.

Arnold was 28, Froilan 36, and Ferdinand 39.

The widows spoke to police spokesperson Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil and Director Marcelo Ele, chief of the Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management.

Restrictive custody

Ele immediately placed Sanchez under restrictive custody for 90 days and ordered the Quezon City police to bring him

to the Philippine National Police-Custodial Center.

Sanchez is not a detainee, Ele said.

"He is restricted to the custodial center. He may leave its premises but only with a guard," Ele said.

The official said he wanted to eliminate any possibility of the cop escaping.

"My assumption is that within 90 days, the fiscal's office would have finished its investigation and decided (whether or not to pursue the case). In the meantime, we want Sanchez under restrictive custody," Ele said.

No whitewash

Ele said this would show the police resolve not to whitewash the case.

Sanchez has 10 days to answer the charge of grave misconduct, according to Senior Insp. Roman Loreto, a DIDM lawyer.

So far, the Jimeno family said they were satisfied with the police handling of the case.

"They're doing their job," said Christopher, another Jimeno brother.

"I have to be strong, I have kids to look after," said Marilou. Froilan had left her with three kids, the youngest of whom is only eight months old.

Mourning in New Year

Arnold had two children, a one-year-old and a three-year-old, while Ferdinand had four, the oldest of whom is only 13.

"We spent the New Year together, but we were not celebrating, we were mourning," Marilou said. "Deep inside me, I still cannot (accept it)."

The pain had cut deeper because Ferdinand, the brother who succumbed to a heart attack, was to have turned 40 on Dec. 31.

His birthday had added flourish to the family's previous New Year celebrations.

Mother's strength

Evangeline said their mother has been a great source of strength.

"My mother is strong. It's me they're worried about," she said. "My in-laws lost a husband. I lost three brothers, and I cannot get over my grief."

GMA announces P35-B subsidy for rice, noodles, other food items

From page A1

Favila said the government's plan was to expand its network of rolling stores selling noodles, rice and other basic commodities at steep discounts.

"We are deploying more rolling stores not only in Metro Manila but also in depressed communities in Metro Cebu and Metro Davao," he said.

The trade secretary said the government was careful not to "flood" the market with subsidized noodles and rice products because it could affect the operations of noodle makers and rice dealers selling to the mainstream market.

"This is the reason why our subsidized noodles and rice are sold only in tightly monitored rolling stores to prevent any unscrupulous groups from taking advantage of the program," Favila said.

Major fare

Because instant noodles have become a major fare of poor Filipinos probably next only to rice,

the government has added noodles among the incentives for poor students to attend classes.

Ms Arroyo said she had asked her Cabinet to release P35 billion immediately to help the poor and to enable the country "to move forward with the speed of light."

She said the fund would finance pro poor programs such as education, housing, health, food and public works.

Ms Arroyo based the amount of P35 billion in savings on the difference between the actual budget deficit estimated at P145 billion last year and the projected budget deficit of P180 billion, which was achieved through better revenue collections and lower spending.

P10 billion, not P35 billion

But a televised program last night with the President, Budget Secretary Romulo Neri said only P10 billion was available for spending by the government since this represented the actual

cash raised from better-than-expected revenues.

Finance Secretary Margarita Teves said the President's order to spend the P35 billion could still be realized if the local government units acceded to her request to channel their surplus funds to the priority infrastructure projects identified by Malacañang.

Neri said the President had ordered the early release of at least P17.5 billion due the LGUs from their internal revenue allotment from last year so that they could spend it within the next three months.

Neri said the government wanted to spend the money wisely in order to minimize the inflationary impact of higher government spending.

Feel good

Teves said the government's strategy was to step up spending in the early part of this year and to boost investor confidence in the hope that this "feel good" mo-

mentum would be carried through to the end of 2006.

He said the government had to make some "pump priming" this quarter to ensure that the economic gains from last year would be carried over this year.

Teves explained that by pump priming the economy, the government would be able to create new jobs, particularly for the poor.

Boy in candy store

Administration Sen. Ralph Recto urged Malacañang to be prudent in spending government savings and to prioritize the health, education and agriculture sectors.

Recto said that while the President had the prerogative to tap savings to augment government programs, she should rein in the government from going on a "mindless splurging of public funds."

"It should not act like a little boy let loose inside a candy store," he said in a statement.

Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, cautioned the President against diverting funds from the spending programs authorized in the 2005 General Appropriations Act.

"The use of savings should be guided by the reenacted 2005 budget. While some items may change, the framework will still be provided by the 2005 GAA because that is the governing law," he said.

The 2005 national budget is expected to be reenacted until the end of March.

Farm-to-market road

During her visit to this tourist town at the end of her six-day annual Christmas holiday in Baguio City, Ms Arroyo inaugurated the P17.3-million Nangonagan-Aguid farm-to-market road upgrading project.

The project is part of the Baguio-Bontoc-Banaue Road, also known as the Halsema Highway.

Tutors push for release of allowance

A MILITANT TEACHERS' GROUP WARNED yesterday of continued restiveness among the country's nearly half a million public school teachers, saying they would continue to press for the release of their unpaid cost-of-living allowances (Cola).

Benjo Basas, spokesperson of the Metro Manila-based Partido ng Manggagawa Teachers Committee, charged in a statement that the teachers' Cola had been "unlawfully denied" them for 16 years now.

The group filed a petition in 1989 asking the Supreme Court to nullify circulars of the Department of Budget and Management integrating government employees' Colas into their basic salaries. The group claimed to represent around 140,000 teachers at the time.

"We foresee another bad or even worse year," said Basas, a teacher from Baesa High School and a director of Caloocan Public School Teachers Association. "Up to this time, no one from the government has shown interest in supporting our claims for our cost-of-living allowance which (has) been unlawfully denied us for more than 16 years. This amid the favorable court decisions for the employees of other government agencies and offices."

Melchor Cayabyab, head of the Manila Teachers' Dignity Coalition, also predicted harder times ahead for teachers.

"Indeed, 2005 has been a tough year for us public educators. Along with the entire working people, we suffered from almost weekly oil price increases that caused the skyrocketing prices of basic commodities and services," he said in a statement.

"We thought this government would give us breathing space in the latter part of the year. But our already dismal conditions worsened when no less than Malacañang itself pushed the enactment and implementation of the VAT reform law this November. This for us was another fatal blow."

Cayabyab, 30, is a teacher at Araullo High School and was hailed two years ago as one Manila's outstanding teachers.

He said he was a frequent client of loan agencies and his take-home pay has been reduced to P3,000 a month.

Aside from payment of their Cola and immediate salary increases, the teachers are also demanding passage of House Bill No. 3004, which seeks to upgrade their job grades and salaries.

Alcuin Papa

Defensor says he'd rather stay at DENR

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY MICHAEL DEFENSOR said yesterday he would rather remain at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources than be moved over to Malacañang, as some recent reports have had it, as President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff.

In an interview, Defensor said he had already told the President about his preference but added that he'd comply with her decision even if it would be contrary to his wish.

"I have even said that I'm willing to leave the Cabinet if it's needed to make way for a unity Cabinet (where members of the opposition would occupy posts in the President's official family)," Defensor told the INQUIRER.

Defensor said that he had already accomplished some of his short-term goals as environment secretary and that he was in position to carry out his medium and long-term goals in the department.

"I told the President I'd rather stay and finish the goals that we've set in the department," the secretary said.

The DENR, during Defensor's watch, has helped spearhead the country's bid to earn billions of pesos from a revitalized mining industry.

Defensor has also started instituting reforms in the logging sector, including canceling some timber license agreements and integrated forest management agreements that had been found to have been used by their respective holders to poach logs in unauthorized areas.

He, however, recently came under fire for allowing the San Jose Timber Corp. of Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile to continue operations in Samar after 26 years of a logging moratorium in the province.

Defensor was since convinced by the bishops in the province to take back the order and bring back a total log ban to Samar. *Norman Bordadora*

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China's economy grew by 9.8% in 2005

BEIJING—CHINA'S ECONOMY GREW 9.8 percent in 2005, a vice minister was quoted as saying on Sunday, revising up an earlier estimate and again confounding forecasts that the country's racing output growth had begun to slow at last.

The higher growth rate, which may not be the final official figure, builds on the latest estimates of China's 2004 gross domestic product, which the statistics office hoisted by one sixth last month.

Fresh figures from the tax office also painted a picture of an economy beating expectations, with 2005 revenue growth almost double the budget estimate.

Ou Xinqian, a vice minister responsible for the National Development and Reform Commission, issued the new GDP growth figure ahead of the release of the statistics office's 2005 estimates due late this month.

"The commission's previous estimate for last year's economic growth was 9.4 percent," the official news agency Xinhua said, citing Ou. "This figure was adjusted according to



CHINESE workers work at the compound of a residential apartment for foreigners in Beijing.

the newly revised GDP (of) 2004." The commission, like other government agencies and

private economists, had expected the economy to show a little moderation in 2005 after

growing 9.5 percent in both 2003 and 2004.

The authorities have been trying for more than two years to slow sectors reckoned to be in danger of overheating and risking an economic bust.

But while economists and investors worried about whether the authorities could pull off a soft landing, so far there has been little sign of any kind of landing at all.

It was unclear whether Ou's growth figure of 9.8 percent represented the official estimate of the government statistician or was merely a preliminary and independent estimate from the commission, China's top economic planning authority.

Separate government figures on Sunday showed tax collections from the booming economy had surged far beyond the budget forecast last year, rising 20 percent to a record 3,087 billion yuan (\$382 billion).

The government had budgeted for a rise of just 11 percent to 2.93 trillion yuan, leaving a 2005 deficit of 300 billion yuan. Reuters

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Man questioned over deadly Indon blast

PALU, INDONESIA—INDONESIAN police said Sunday they were questioning a man about a New Year's Eve market bombing which killed seven people, in the latest attack by suspected Islamic militants on Christians in Central Sulawesi province.

"Acting on information from witnesses, we are questioning this man. However we have yet to declare him a suspect," provincial police spokesperson Rais Adam told AFP by telephone.

Local news reports said the man was seen in the market the night before Saturday morning's bombing at a market stall which sold pork in the religiously divided provincial capital of Palu.

"Based on evidence and information from witnesses, we have a reason to

suspect that he is linked to the bombing," provincial police chief Brigadier General Oegroeso was quoted as saying by the Detik.com news website.

Police said the man had asked questions of people in the area a day before the bombing.

Rais said seven people died in the bombing, revising an earlier toll of eight.

At least 54 mostly Christian shoppers who had thronged the stall to buy pork, which is forbidden for Muslims, were injured. An unexploded bomb was found near the scene.

Security in the city was tightened after the bombing.

Police and soldiers carrying rifles patrolled the streets as national police

chief General Sutanto and intelligence chief Syamsir Siregar inspected the blast site.

Security minister Widodo Adisucipto said Saturday that the attack was "related to terror networks which have so far been active in Indonesia." But police said it did not bear the hallmarks of fugitive Malaysian militant Noordin Mohammad Top and his group, which normally targets foreigners.

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim-populated nation but Christians and Muslims live in roughly equal numbers in parts of Sulawesi and in the Malukus.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono condemned the attack and immediately ordered an investigation. AFP

Italian hostages in Yemen refuse release

SANA—THREE ITALIAN WOMEN TAKEN hostage by Yemeni tribesmen on Sunday refused to be released, instead insisting on returning to their two male companions who were still held captive, local government sources said.

The kidnapping of the five tourists occurred just one day after a German family of five, including a retired top diplomat, were freed and was the fourth abduction of foreigners in the country within the space of three months.

"We have received a report of the kidnapping of five Italians ... in Sirwa in the region of Marib," 170 km east of Sanaa, a security official told AFP, requesting anonymity.

A local government official said that three females were released shortly after and handed over to the local government in Marib, while the two men remained captive.

He said that negotiations including tribal chiefs and local officials had started to secure the release of the remaining captives.

But the freed women refused to be released without their companions and demanded to rejoin the other two in captivity, a local government source said.

"After they (the three women) were handed over to the local government, they refused the initiative to release them and insisted to remain with the other two hostages," the source told AFP.

"They demanded to return (to the hideout) after arriving in the office of the local government," he added, saying that the trio had now rejoined their companions.

Italy's foreign ministry confirmed the kidnapping of Italian citizens in Yemen, saying it knew their identities but without giving further details.

A later statement said the ministry could not confirm the release of the three women.

A tribal source told AFP that the captors belong to the Al al-Zayidi clan, which belongs to the Jahem tribe, and that they are demanding the release of eight members of their clan imprisoned for a tribal vendetta. AFP

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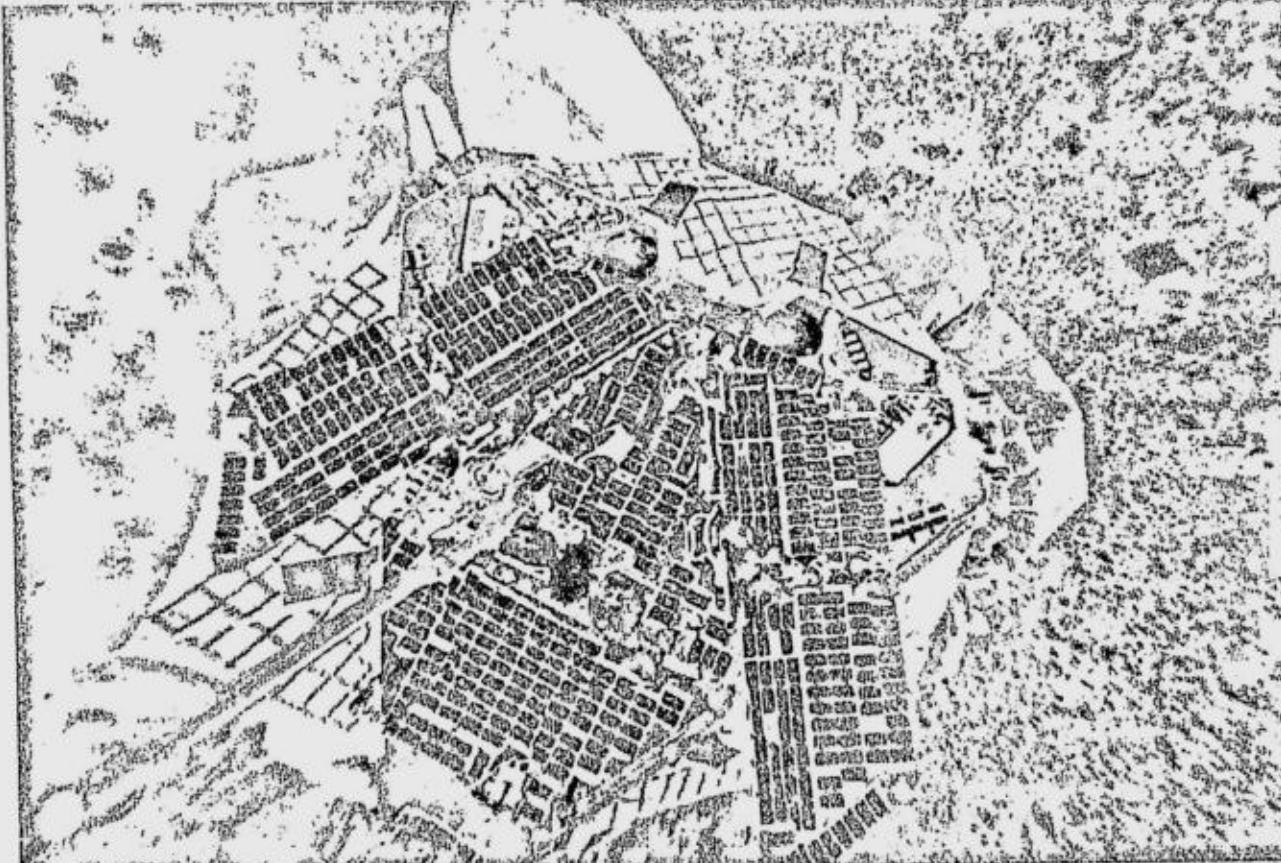
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THIS mosaic file image taken by the navigation camera on the Mars Exploration rover Spirit shows an overhead view of the rover on the surface of Mars after its successful landing on Jan. 3, 2004.

2 YEARS AFTER Two Mars rovers still exploring the Red Planet

LOS ANGELES—THE WARRANTY expired long ago on Nasa's twin robots motoring around Mars.

In two years, they have traveled a total of 11 km. Not impressed? Try keeping your car running in a climate where the average temperature is 67 below zero and where dust devils can reach 161 kph.

These two golf cart-sized vehicles were only expected to last three months.

"These rovers are living on borrowed time. We're so past warranty on them," says Steven Squyres of Cornell University, the Mars mission's principal researcher. "You try to push them hard every day because we're living day to day."

The rover Spirit landed on Mars on Jan. 3, 2004, and Opportunity followed on Jan. 24. Since then, they've set all sorts of records and succeeded in the mission's main assignment: finding geologic evidence that water once flowed on Mars.

Part of the reason for their long survival is pure luck. Their lives were extended several times by dust devils that blew away dust that covered their solar panels, restoring their ability to generate electricity.

Like most Earth-bound vehicles, these identical robots have their own personalities.

The overachieving Opportunity dazzled scientists from the start. AP

eclipsed its twin by making the mission's first profound discovery—evidence of water at or near the surface eons ago that could have implications for life.

The rock-climbing Spirit went down in the history books by becoming the first robot to scale an extraterrestrial hill. Last summer, it completed a daredevil climb to the summit of Husband Hill—at tall as the Statue of Liberty—despite fears that it might not survive the weather.

The rovers haven't been all get-up and go—technical hiccups have at times limited their activity, even from the start. At one point, Spirit had a balky front wheel, but engineers overcame the problem by driving it in reverse. Last spring, Opportunity got stuck hub-deep in sand while trying to crest a foot-high dune, and was freed after weeks of effort by the Earth-bound engineers.

The six-wheeled travelers, managed by Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, also are showing signs of aging. In November, a motor on Opportunity's robotic arm stalled and the arm failed to extend while it was surveying a rock outcrop. The engineers fixed that problem after two weeks.

This mission is the first time any probe has extensively roamed across Mars, whose rocky landscape is a dangerous place for man-made objects to settle and roam. AP

Israeli jets hit Fatah building

GAZA—Israeli aircraft fired a missile on Monday into a building in the southern Gaza Strip that often used by members of the Fatah movement of President Mahmoud Abbas, residents said. The Israeli army said that it had "targeted a building used by the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades terror organization." The Brigades are part of Fatah. There were no immediate reports of casualties. Reuters

Another Indon dies of suspected bird flu

JAKARTA—An Indonesian man suffering symptoms of bird flu died Monday, as tests on another man suspected of being the country's 12th fatality from the virus showed he was not infected, health officials said. A 39-year-old man died after being treated for a day at Jakarta's Sultani Saroso hospital, Indonesia's main bird flu treatment center, hospital spokesperson Iham Patu said. Tests were being carried out to determine if he died of bird flu, he said. If confirmed, the man would be Indonesia's 12th fatality from the H5N1 virus. AFP

Yemen landslide kills 54

SANA—The death toll from a landslide that devastated a Yemeni village has risen to 54, the state news agency said Sunday, as hopes dimmed for finding alive dozens of missing people. More than 72 hours after the landslide hit the small village of Al-Dhafeer on a rocky hillside west of the capital Sanaa on Thursday, eight survivors have been recovered from the rubble but 34 people remain missing. "Rescuers are still trying to find survivors among the 34 people reported missing and who are believed to still be under the rubble... even if the chance of finding them alive is diminishing," the official Saba news agency said.

AFP

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A better year

THE NATION WENT THROUGH A POLITICALLY troubled, economically depressed 2005, but it seems that things will be looking up this year. We've seen some encouraging signs weeks before the end of last year:

The peso ended the year with a bang, rising to a two-and-a-half year high of 53.03 against the dollar. It was boosted by increased remittances from overseas Filipino

workers and market optimism created

EDITORIAL by the government's improving fiscal position. BSP Governor Amando

Tetangco said that the peso was the world's best performing currency in 2005. It could hit 52 to the dollar this year, the BSP said.

Remittances from overseas Filipino workers were seen as hitting an all-time high of \$12.3 billion. Of this, about 87 percent or \$10.7 billion was expected to come in through the banking system. The increased use of formal banking channels for the remittances could help develop better saving habits among the OFWs and result in a more productive use of the dollars earned by them.

Overseas workers' remittances are expected to remain at about the same level this year, unless some big, disruptive event occurs in the Middle East or other parts of the world where many Filipinos are working.

Exporters are selling their dollars, importers are not hedging and foreign investors are buying Philippine stocks and bonds. The spread on the country's bonds has been narrowing, and an upgrade in the country's credit rating is predicted.

Government officials said that as a result of the higher tax collection, the government would be able to wipe out its budget deficit as early as 2008 instead of 2010 as previously projected.

Consumers and businessmen can look forward to a good year as oil prices are expected to stay steady or even go down this year, Raul Concepcion, chair of the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said. This is due to the plans of the United States and other big oil users to aggressively tap alternative energy sources, Russia's move to refine more oil to meet global demand and the expected resolution of political issues in Iraq, enabling it to produce more oil.

Last year the weather was relatively benign. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said 2005 was relatively less destructive insofar as tropical cyclones were concerned. We can only hope that similar good weather will prevail this year so that agriculture could enjoy a bountiful harvest and so that the nation would suffer minimal human casualties and minimal destruction to public and private property.

Toward the end of last year, spokesperson Luis Jalandoni of the National Democratic Front said the prospects for the resumption of peace talks between the government and the NDF were as bleak as they were after the talks were suspended six months ago. In the South, the Mindanao People's Caucus lambasted Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan, Southern Command chief, for accusing the Moro Islamic Liberation Front of rebuilding its base and recruiting new members. As of now, it appears that the settlement of the two conflicts is still an elusive goal.

On the political front, President Macapagal-Arroyo survived her worst political crisis last year but the question about the legitimacy of her presidency has not been resolved. The opposition can be expected to mount a new impeachment move soon after the regular session of Congress opens in July. The renewed political turmoil can be expected to have some effect again on the economy.

Whatever happens this year, the Filipinos' hopefulness, optimism and resilience can be expected to see them through hard and troubled times. A recent survey of the Social Weather Stations showed that 85 percent of Filipinos are looking forward this year with hope rather than fear.

Despite their poverty and wretched condition in life, most Filipinos remain an eternally happy, contented people. In the World Values Survey published by the University of Michigan in November 2004, the Philippines ranked high among 82 countries in terms of feelings of "subjective well-being" which combined its happiness and "life-satisfaction" scores.

The Filipinos' optimism and resilience helped them survive the darkest days of the Japanese occupation, the repression and rapacity of the Marcos dictatorship and the effects of natural and manmade disasters in the past 100 years. They can be expected to survive whatever catastrophes, setbacks and misfortunes fate will throw their way this year.

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, PRESIDENT GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo renewed her 2005 resolution to leash her well-known temper. Even when provoked? That happens, we're told, from dawn to midnight within that snake pit dubbed Malacañang.

But "can one make resolutions when over 40?" Andre Gide wondered. "I live according to 20-year-old habits."

Isn't that the problem? An over-40 (oh, all right, 58) year old President habitually refuses to go ballistic at piranhas about her, from Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to Camilo Sabio, Commission on Good Government chair.

Sabio is no Haydee Yorac, his predecessor in PCGG. In every job Yorac took on—human rights lawyer, professor, peace negotiator, poll commissioner—she embodied Juvenal's axiom that "the sole nobility is integrity." Thus, she won the Magsaysay Award. A grateful nation interred her at Libingan Ng Mga Bayani.

Led by Yorac, the PCGG won a Supreme Court decision that wrested \$683 million stashed in Marcos shell foundations abroad. The loot went to a fund-strapped national treasury.

The Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., shattered an 800-plus-motions-over-17-years gridlock clamped by Marcos cronies to squirrel the notorious coconut levy. Levies were "public funds," the Court ruled, not a private kitty, as businessman Eduardo Cojuangco and friends claimed. Yorac's PCGG actively sought that ruling.

Despite failing health, she shepherded levy cases in the Sandiganbayan, which ruled in May 2004 that 27 percent of San Miguel shares bought with levies were "owned by government, in trust for all coconut farmers." Justices Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, Diosdado Peralta and Francisco Villaruz directed that the shares be "reconveyed."

The court earlier forfeited 72.2 percent of United Coconut Planters Bank stocks to the gov-

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2006

OPINION

A1

Chino: My music is my prayer

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



THE RECOMMENDATION FOR NO ELECTIONS (No-El) in the transitory provisions of the draft constitution drawn up by the Consultative Commission has sent many folks into paroxysms of hysteria bordering on the comical. My feeling is that they're only recommendations—testing the waters, if you will—by majority of the ConCom, and could always be rejected by the people.

Some commissioners who voted for No-El have argued that postponing the 2007 elections would give the country a period of political calm and peace or a breathing spell, which would enable it to focus on the economy and other serious problems. Part of the bonus, it's argued, would be lessening graft and corruption since no elective public official would need to raise campaign funds while in office. But it's evident that majority of the people won't buy No-El; they always want to have a say on who will govern them (not to mention the fact that many of them derive benefits from the political exercises).

In shooting down No-El, the opposition has accused President Macapagal-Arroyo of orchestrating it so as to be able to stay in office until 2010. This accusation is hard to fathom, since GMA does not benefit from scrapping the 2007 elections because her term, unless she's impeached or ousted, ends in 2010.

So, let's forget No-El and focus the debates instead on the more substantive portions of the draft constitution. Above all, let's keep in mind that there are two steps in amending the Charter: deliberations by Congress convened as a constituent assembly, and submission of the provisions approved by the assembly to the people in a plebiscite. In this process, let's get our inputs in, for if we fail to do so, we won't have anyone to blame but ourselves.

Many years ago, my late Miami-based uncle, Barry Olivares, rode with us from Quezon City to Manila, with my husband at the wheel. He grew tense watching drivers zig-zag in and out of the lanes and later exclaimed that he could never drive here. That was several decades ago, and driving habits of Pinoys have since grown even worse. Which is why it's not surprising that the US Embassy in Manila would issue an advisory,

not against terrorist attacks but on the dangers of driving in Manila. The advisory noted the "uniquely Filipino style of driving, which is often erratic and unpredictable." The advisory added: "Those with orderly driving habits may find it difficult to adjust to the chaos of Manila's streets. Caution is the golden rule... Lane markings and crosswalks are mere suggestions and stop signs might as well be in Braille. Of the few working stoplights, they are too long when obeyed and too dangerous when not." It also noted that buses stop in the middle of the streets, allowing passengers to exit into oncoming traffic and that drivers have the bad habit of changing lanes without adequate notice.

Some media personalities took offense at that driving advisory, pointing out that bad driving habits are universal. Sure, but our Pinoy drivers really take the cake. *Sobra talaga.* This frenzied Christmas season, traffic became horrible due to the lifting of color-coding, but it was also because the buses were loading and unloading anywhere, forcing other drivers to swerve. Over the years, the MMDA has gone to great lengths to correct the bad driving habits and ease the traffic, including putting yellow lanes for buses. But the problem is, the MMDA's efforts are mostly *ningas cogon*. Today, pandemonium reigns in Metro Manila's streets: people cross anywhere they want, and even tear down the wire barriers within spitting distance of the elevated pedestrian crossings. The MMDA itself has also failed to remove traffic lights in places where they are no longer needed because of the U-turn slots. This only adds to the confusion and the perception that traffic rules need not be obeyed.

Traffic and bad driving can be remedied with po-

litical will. MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando has made a lot of enemies, but he also has a lot of admirers because of his guts in enforcing the law. But lately he seems to have taken a long vacation. Paging Bayani.

Last Saturday, I wrote about Filipino child prodigy Joaquin "Chino" Gutierrez, 15, who recently returned from his studies in Munich to perform as violin soloist at the 75th birthday concert of Oscar Yatco with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra. His father, Lamberto Gutierrez, called up to make a minor correction: the Stanford University "Education Program for Gifted Youth" that Chino enrolled in at the age of 10, while still a student at the Community of Learners, was Internet-based and not on online TV. He finished advanced Algebra in less than a year and so impressed were the Stanford officials, who waived the \$5,000 enrollment fee, that they gave him a standing invitation to enter the university.

Blessed with prodigious gifts in math, language and music, Chino had to catch up on Latin upon arrival in Munich. His high school classmates had been studying the subject since Grade 5. But apart from his 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. high school classes, Chino takes violin lessons with renowned violin professor Dr. Jens Ellermann, who considers him his star pupil. He puts in about four to five hours of practice daily.

We were awed by this punishing schedule and asked him what he does to relax. Chino loves to take long walks in Munich's beautiful parks, surfing on the Internet and watching movies with his friends. Girls are already in the horizon, says the father, but there is no serious romance yet.

Chino never forgets he's Filipino and wears a tiny Philippine flag pin daily on his uniform. Above all, he's very grateful to the Lord for his talents, especially his music "which, after all, came from Him." Once he told his grand-aunt, Linda Sebastian, "My music is my prayer."

What's his advice to young people? "Dream big. Don't think small. Work hard and your dreams might come true."

My brother Manny

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

D.C. area, where he worked for many years as a driver for the Latvian Embassy, Manny had become so familiar with the environs that he would have given even professional tour guides stiff competition.

It was Manny who told us about the summer outdoor concerts in Wolftrap, which he frequented, although we finally made the trip only last year, for a concert of Johnny Mathis.

One memorable excursion he took me and my family on was a visit to the then just-opened Roosevelt Memorial on the banks of the Potomac, followed by a picnic on the riverside, with fast food chicken and chips. My sister Chona was horrified to learn that Manny had brought us to a KFC outlet (which I remember for the counter behind a sheet of bulletproof glass) in a "bad" part of D.C., but it was just like Manny with his quirky sense of humor to take us to witness even the seedy side of the capital.

Relatives itching for bargain buys in the weekend yard sales around the suburban Virginia area knew they could always count on Manny for chauffeuring services. Just as he always made himself available for emergency trips to the doctor or hospital, rides to the airport, soccer games and family occasions.

LATER in life, especially after his second marriage to the former Angela Fe Andres, Manny, a former seminarian, was reborn in the faith, becoming an active parish worker and a stalwart of the Legion of Mary.

About a year ago, Rob, the then-fiance of our niece Cesi, began asking Manny and our brother Father Boboy questions about the Catholic faith. Unknown to most of us, Manny and Father Boboy began talking in earnest to Rob, who was born a

Baptist. When Rob moved to Montreal to be closer to Cesi, who was on her senior year at McGill University, he began taking formal lessons in their parish. For his baptism (and confirmation and first communion), Rob asked Manny to stand as his godfather, and Manny took the 12-hour train ride just for the rites, leaving the same evening so he could be back in time for work. Cesi and Rob were married some months later.

After he was diagnosed with stomach cancer last March and had to undergo an operation, we learned that his friends in the parish and the Legion of Mary had organized a prayer brigade for his survival and recovery. Though deeply touched, Chona and I weren't all that surprised, knowing how Manny with his capacity for making friends, had endeared himself to all those people.

IN ALL the time that he spent in the hospital and while undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment, Manny's only wish was to see his son Rocky, who is staying here.

But there were problems obtaining a US visa for Rocky, and Chona tells us that the last time she saw Manny at the hospital, shortly before she was to leave for Manila to attend a wedding, his only request was to have Rocky's visa expedited.

Rocky was able to talk with his dad one last time a few hours before Manny passed away, a conversation that was cut short because Manny was too weak to talk for long. Coincidentally, we were also holding a "family pow-wow" at the time, planning what we could do to grant Manny's last wish, plans that would soon prove futile. In an e-mail message, his daughter Michelle, who was at his bedside, writes: "Dad suffered for a year fighting to stay alive and I can sleep through the night knowing God is with him. No more pain and suffering. I spent the whole day with him in the hospital the day before he passed away and he told me that God kissed his forehead."

We celebrate Manny's life and memory with a Mass and Memorial Service tomorrow, Wednesday, Jan. 4, at 7 p.m. at the Lower Chapel of Christ the King Parish in Greenmeadows. Thank you for your prayers and kind thoughts.

Gold

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY



Bambi L. Harper

DR. B. LEGARDA E-MAILED TO SAY THAT AN *encomienda* was the right to collect taxes on a piece of land. He added: "Forgot to add that an *encomienda* was not permanent but had a limited duration, say, one, two or three lifetimes—all the more reason for concluding that it was not ownership. Of course, the crown wanted to get back the sources of revenue! Supposedly it was given to those who took part in the conquest, but there were *encomenderos* with names like Liwag and Macapagal—see *Cushner's 1970s book on Spain in the Philippines*.

"*Encomiendas* were also given to charitable institutions like San Juan de Dios Hospital; I remember seeing in the archives many years ago *encomienda* records for that hospital dating from as late as the 18th century."

I bring this up because if you've been following developments lately, you'd know from the papers that there's a resurgence of interest in gold. There was a boom in that metal in the 1930s (I have an old stock certificate of my dad's some place of a gold company called Anaconda based in Shanghai), and today, there are speculations that gold may reach \$800 an ounce, nearly double its present price. The Philippines has always been a gold-producing country, and even before the Spaniards came, it was trading gold with the Chinese in exchange for pottery, porcelain, silks and other commodities. Gold was apparently the main object of the Chinese traders.

Giovanni Gaetano, pilot of the San Juan from the ill-fated Villalobos expedition, in his description of Mindanao, wrote of "a very special gold, which is dug out of mines in the same land; they value it, and use it for exchange, and wear chains and jewelry made of it." Another member of the expedition, Garcia Alvarado, spoke of an old Filipino that he ransomed who informed them that there was a large town on the island of Abuyo where the Chinese who kept a house there for their merchandise would go every year to trade "gold

and some slaves." In Cebu, he continued, there were still some Spaniards from Magellan's time and that the Chinese would go there to "buy gold and certain jewelry because that island has it."

He said Butuan, near Zubu (Cebu), "is rich in gold" and junks from many places would go there to trade. North of Samar was an island he called Al-bay that had gold mines.

In Sarangani, the Villalobos crew also noted that a lot of gold was found. In the five accounts of this expedition, whenever Filipinos are mentioned, they are described as wearing gold ear-rings, bracelets, necklaces and even on their teeth. Filipinos apparently were as fond of gold jewelry and bangles as now (otherwise why would Virra Mall do such thriving business?), but the other favorite down the ages has been Chinese jars and plates which were considered, together with the gold, as part of their wealth.

By the time Legaspi's troops occupied Luzon and the rest of the archipelago, the country had been parceled out into *encomiendas* or trust territories. It must have been with gold in mind that some of the recipients chose the north eastern and eastern districts of Mindanao, aware of reports of the legendary gold. In 1573, Andres de Mirandola reported to the king that "much gold is found on the island of Vendanao, in the districts of Butuan, Cagayan and Paraso." (The name Paraso still exists today as a barrio in Caraga.)

Guido de Lavezares, later governor general after Legaspi, was one of those who had an en-

comienda along the Butuan River. The first Spaniards who settled in Cebu had *encomiendas* in Surigao and Paraso as well.

Two present-day towns in southern Surigao are Bislig and Lingui, names that sound similar to types of gold found even in Luzon. *Bizilin* was gold worth a tael (1.5 ounces) and *linguin* was worth P4. Filipinos used these for trade and barter, although in reports dating to the 1600s, these were spelled as "bixilin" and "linguin."

Today we hear of the placer mines. Here is an account from the Augustinian Memoranda 1580 about a small island near Placer: "The chief mines ... are ... on the island that the Spaniards call Vermeja, about two leagues from Cagayan, where, according to a report, ... the greatest wealth of all" could be found.

There were many gold placers in many small islets near Siargao, according to Miguel de Loarca (1582). Francisco Collins, in his "Labor Evangelico," states that the best known place for gold was Butuan. Datu Silongan told his father to send some samples to the captain general in Manila. Two bamboo tubes "of one-half fathom length" and as thick as a leg were filled with gold dust. The other was filled with "gold in the form of necklaces made of different kinds of rings linked together."

Thirty years later, Fernando de Silva, an *encomendero*, said that all the natives had to do to pay their tribute for the year was work for a week "because there was so much gold in the river."

Granted that this was all a long time ago, but the renewed interest in the metal today confirms that there is still gold in "dem dar hills." So if anyone tells you that this is a poor country, don't believe him. It's only the people who are poor basically because they have been ill-served ("Keep them poor and keep them ignorant," as one politician allegedly said), but this does not have to be the case.

Comments at bambiharper@yahoo.com

Chickenjoy dream

IT WAS ALREADY PAST 4 IN THE AFTERNOON AND I hadn't eaten my lunch yet. I had gone to the gym and proceeded to school to check my grades. I had dropped by my old office to check on my friends but I was told they were attending a meeting, so I decided to go home.

Alighting from the Baclaran station of the LRT, I saw a Jollibee store and decided to eat. I had another 1 1/2-hour

YOUNG BLOOD

Teresa Patricia B. Bernal

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

It was nothing more than a bowl of oatmeal.

When my food came, a small grimy boy about four years of age approached my table, begging for alms. I instinctively shooed him away, and started to eat while he went on to the next table, asking for loose change from the other patrons.

But though I was tired and really hungry, I lost some of my appetite soon after taking a few bites. I began to search for the boy inside the store, hoping he was still around. I saw him being shooed by other people, and I wished he would pass by my table again so I could make it up to him.

When he moved within earshot, I called out to him. I asked him if he had already eaten, which was really a stupid question because he looked like he hadn't had a decent meal for days.

I asked him if he wanted the same stuff as what I was eating. He said he wanted a toy. But the "kiddie meal" only included an educational VCD, which I was sure he wouldn't have any use for. I decided to buy him the "chickenjoy and spaghetti meal" instead. I told him to watch my food while I went back to the counter to order his meal.

When I turned around to ask him what drink he would like, he had this wide smile on his face that seemed to say, "I can't believe I have hit a jackpot with this crazy woman who was willing to buy me some chickenjoy." And the thought made me smile, too.

I went back to my seat and asked him to wait for his food. I asked for his name but he just mumbled something. I was shocked to know that he lived in Apelo, a good 10 minutes by car, and a good half-hour on foot. How on earth did he get here and who was he with? It was raining and the streets were muddy.

He again told me he was wishing for a toy, but I explained there was none at Jollibee. "Sana nag-McDo na lang tayo, may laruan dun," he said, obviously disappointed.

"Pasaway ka talaga. Namili ka pa! (You are really naughty and very picky too)," I chided him gently. But I couldn't really blame him; he was probably as surprised as I was that I had bought him a meal.

He asked for P20, saying his mother had instructed him to buy a kilo of rice if he would have enough money. I was starting to feel like he was taking advantage of my kindness. But when I asked him how many siblings he had and he showed me seven fingers, and said they were five in the family, I gave him some coins anyway.

I asked him to read the number written on the plastic marker, and he told me it was 13. When I said it was 2, he snickered. I told him to count the coins in his hand, and he said there were five. But there was more.

I thought how sad it was that this boy could not count and recognize numbers while my 5-year-old niece could already count to 100. I wondered what his future would be, and I thought it was most likely that he would grow up and try to earn a living by thieving and end up in jail. He knew very little more than begging, roaming the streets without slippers, and shouting profanities at his playmates. And his mother had imposed upon him the responsibility of bringing home some rice that he could share with his siblings.

When his food came securely taped, I told him to share it with his mom when he got home. Again, he gave me such a big smile that it showed most of his stained little baby teeth. Then he left, without a word.

I was filled with one of the best feelings I had in a very long time, pleased with what I had done and happier still to see his big, grateful smile.

I had lost my appetite completely, but the thought of the long ride home prompted me to finish my meal. As I left the store, I saw him at the foot of the stairs, clutching the plastic bags. When he saw me, he again flashed his big smile and I noticed that spaghetti sauce was all over his face. I waved at him to say goodbye and walked to the jeepney stop. He might not have known how to say thank you, but that smile said everything for me. I was grinning from ear to ear all the way home.

I've been told that Thursday is a lucky day for Pisceans. My horoscope says so, and the day has been holding some little surprises for me for years now. But that particularly Thursday, I had gotten out of bed feeling miserable and convinced that nothing could get me out of that mood. But what do you know? The surprise was of my own doing, and ironically, I ended up surprised, too.

I must admit that I'm a snob. I don't want to have anything to do with strangers, and I hate filthy beggars. I seldom commute and I don't care much for fast food. So who would have thought that I would be doing all those things in one day and come out of it happy lot? The kid had his Chickenjoy dream fulfilled, but that experience could very well be the start of my pursuit for self-realization.

Teresa Patricia B. Bernal, 25, is doing her master's in early childhood education at De La Salle University.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

The INQUIRER is a member of the

For whose benefit is Charter-change

A CREATURE OF GLORIA MACAPAGAL-Arroyo, the Consultative Commission (ConCom) has lived up to the expectations of its creator. First, it recommended a bribery-driven formula to keep GMA in power until 2010. Second, it proposed that the exploitation of natural resources and the operation of public utilities, reserved by all Philippine constitutions (past and present) as the exclusive birthright of Filipinos, be opened to foreigners.

Apparently, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales did not have to enlist Venables services to raise lobby money for the ConCom. On its own, it seemed the ConCom was willing to act in the interest of transnational corporations, as it actually did. Or did Venables long arm reach the ConCom, thus deservedly earning Gonzales' P50-million down payment?

The truth is that the Constitution has nothing to do with our people's dismal condition. The culprit is the World Bank-International Monetary Fund debt conditions, which constitute a superstructure

of policies and programs over and above the Constitution. For example, the EVAT law is a mandate of the WB-IMF, not of the Constitution. The purpose of the EVAT is to improve our country's capacity to service our debts, not to raise funds for infrastructure development and social services. When Malacañang says that the EVAT is for the benefit of the people, not only does it pick the people's pocket to service the regime's debts, it also insults the people's intelligence.

The principal sponsors of Charter change—GMA, Speaker Jose de Venecia, and former President Fidel V. Ramos—are not out to revise the Constitution for the benefit of the people; they are out to divert the people's attention from the fact that the treacherous Arroyo-De Venecia-Ramos triumvirate has been and still is in the service of the WB-IMF.

—Amado Gat Inciong,
Inciong and Associates,
Unit 301 Union Square Condominium,
145 15th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City

An international syndrome

THIS IS A DEFENSE OF RANDY DAVID'S Nov. 13 column, titled "The return of the repressed," although this may not be as comprehensive and effective as the one he can come up with. Cliff Michelena, obviously a conservative American citizen, refuted the view of the respected educator by citing an incident in New York wherein a Filipino committed a heinous crime by raping and killing his Puerto Rican ex-girlfriend. He then proceeded to emphasize that "there was no public outcry" against the crime, unlike in the Philippines where the public and the media overreacted to the rape of a Filipina by US marines. (PDI, 12/05/05)

I would like to point out to Michelena that "there was no public outcry" in the United States because the accused Filipino was not a part of a Philippine military or diplomatic mission to the United States. If he were a Filipino serviceman or diplomat, there certainly would have

been a different reaction.

Michelena should take note that, similarly, crimes committed in the Philippines by private American nationals have not drawn as much controversy as the recent Subic rape has. Furthermore, the Philippines never colonized the United States. Therefore, atrocities committed by Filipinos in that country would not be as easily viewed as an assault on that nation's dignity and integrity.

But when a soldier of a former colonizer commits such acts against a citizen of its former colony in the latter's territory at that, it can only be seen as arrogance and add insult to injury. Understandably, it could only hurt the former colony's pride and dignity. If this reaction is "American phobia" according to Michelena, I'm afraid that it is already an international syndrome.

—DANIEL ALOC,
Adamson University,
4th year A.B. Political Science



THE QUIAPO Church all lit up for the Christmas season.

Quiapo Church, amusement park

THE INQUIRER FEATURED THE QUIAPO Church on the front page of its Dec. 17 issue. But has anyone noticed the blatant changes that have been done on the church lately? They have distressed me so much. The statues outside the church, which used to be white in conformity with the rather conservative color scheme of the facade, are being painted with other

colors. (Just imagine coloring the statues in Bernini's famous colonnade at St. Peter's!)

This goes without mentioning the other changes that have been done inside, without taking into account the architectural and aesthetic composition of the building. It may not be long before this church, an important landmark of our

culture and faith, will look like a veritable amusement park.

While I appreciate the sincere and well-meaning efforts to renovate and embellish the church, I do believe these recent projects need reconsideration and, perhaps, repair.

—LEO R. OCAMPO,
325 Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila

Wanted: bright, novel ideas

I AM SICK AND TIRED OF HEARING Senators Franklin Drilon, Francis Pangilinan, Rodolfo Biazon, Aquilino Pimentel and Archbishop Oscar Cruz say the country will get worse under President Macapagal-Arroyo. Could they please let the nation know of their clear, doable plans to cure the nation of all its ills, aside from ousting a sitting president? Something tangible, something immediate, something that will radically change our present condition—from an impoverished, graft-ridden nation to a prosperous country of upright and useful citizens? Many of us are waiting for some really bright, novel ideas from these good guys. I can hardly wait.

—NANCY ISLA,
412 12th St, Galveston, TX, USA

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE REPLY OF Bro. Eddie Villanueva and ZOE Broadcasting Network (ZOE) (PDI, 11/28/05) to the Oct. 8 column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan.

Our client Benito Araneta filed his complaint for estafa against Bro. Eddie Villanueva before the Office of the City Prosecutor of Mandaluyong City on Oct. 11, 2004. Brother Eddie submitted his counter-affidavit on Dec. 21, 2004. On Jan. 10, 2005, Araneta filed his reply and, on Jan. 17, 2005, Brother Eddie filed his rejoinder after which the matter was submitted for the resolution of the city prosecutor. On the basis of those submissions, the prosecutor, in a resolution dated Feb. 17, 2005, ruled that there was probable cause to charge Brother Eddie with estafa.

These facts clearly belie Brother Eddie's claim that there was no judicious determination of facts prior to the issuance of the arrest warrant against him.

Contrary to Brother Eddie's claim, Araneta was not informed of the foiled deal with Velez of VTV Corp. during the negotiations between ZOE and Entertainment Network Limited (Enter-Net) in 2001.

Also, the professional services of Eric Domagas, former VTV president, were engaged only sometime in November 2001 upon the recommendation of Brother Eddie. He was never Araneta's adviser. Domagas, in his sworn statement as Brother Eddie's witness, clearly stated that he was informed and consulted by Brother Eddie about a Memorandum of Agreement and Joint Venture Agreement with Enter-Net and Araneta only after the agreements had

already been entered into. It would not have been possible, therefore, for Domagas to confirm Araneta's prior knowledge of the alleged "foiled VTV deal."

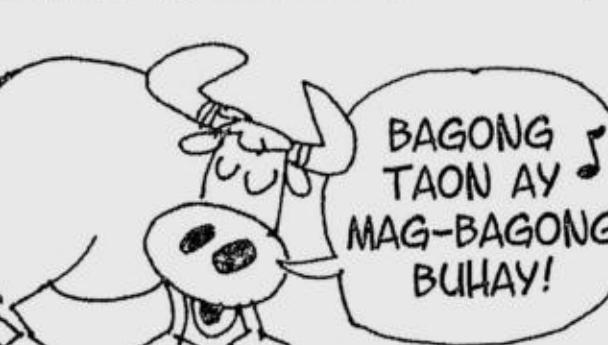
Brother Eddie's claim that ZOE was "open to enter into a co." with Enter-Net" is further belied by two letters, dated June 17, 2003 and July 8, 2003, sent by ZOE's counsel to VTV. The letters demanded the execution and delivery of the necessary agreements and contracts under its Memorandum of Understanding (dated Feb. 28, 1999) with ZOE. They also denied that ZOE agreed with VTV to a mutual recession of the MOU.

The falsity of Brother Eddie's claim is even more apparent, by his very own notarial rescission of ZOE's MOU with VTV contained in his letter to VTV dated July 28, 2003.

Furthermore, Araneta and Enter-Net never had the opportunity to actually take over the management of Channel 11. Neither Araneta nor Enter-Net were ever allowed to enter the facilities of Channel 11 which remained under the complete control and supervision of Brother Eddie's management staff, despite repeated requests made by Araneta/Enter-Net for a turnover of management to its people.

Finally, the estafa case against Brother Eddie is simply a result of a business venture that turned sour. It is not tainted with any political motive, far from how Brother Eddie would like it to appear. The fact that Araneta is a close cousin of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo bears no relevance to the case.

—MANUEL C. BARCELONA III,
Barcelona & Associates Law Office



DYING, NOBLE PRACTICE
of DELICADEZA..

—francis del moral, 29, san
fabian pangasinan

my message to politicians? why do
i have to say anything to them?

NO. %\$!#@

—a.espiritu, 25, mandaluyong

PANDAYin ang mga tiwaling
opisyal at itapon sa ENCHANTADIA
para don maalala nila bad nilang
gawa MALAPIT NA NAMAN ELEC-
TION!!!

—RODEL VALDEZ, 18, Tarlac

Make da best of everything da
benefit of da country
and a credit on ur part.

—Lovelyn Fortaliza, 32, Cavite

may their work attitudes change 4
d better, as d year changes

—fernando laus, 31, baguio city

d politician must legislate him-
self, examine d heart, conscience
of himself thru morality n spirituality.

—alfonso olavere, 47, irosin sor-
sogon ct

bagong taon, magbagong buhay
na ka! Maging honest political ser-
vant na, at stop na ang pangungu-
rakot!

—marie joy quisquisan, 27, ili-
gan city

to show ur sincerity in helping our
government, start by giving up ur
Pork Barrel and stop ur lavish

spending...

—Roy Richard Ruiz, 45, Cebu
City

please think of your countrymen
before yourselves.

—leticia lafavilla, 56, manila

I hope next year there will be no
more politician alive, but only
SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE. Be truth-
ful pls!!

—Rodion Bithao, 38, Sta. Maria
Bulacan

Tama na ang hidwaan at umpsa-
han ang taon na maiangat ang
ekonomiya ng ating bansa.

—Arsenia Velasco, 52, Bacoor

MAY OUR POLITICIANS dis coming.
NEW YEAR, REALIZE d SIGNIFI-
CANCE of the word: SERVICE.
Dey OUGHT 2 SERVE, NOT 2 be
SERVED..

—James Philip Narisma, 39,
iloilo city

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each section.

INQUIRER
As the new year begins,
what's your message to
the politicians?

new year, i hope they will bring us
new hope for a better tomorrow!
—therese salangsang, 18,
general santos city

unahin muna ang taumbayan,
hindi ang pangu2rakot, may go
have mercy on them. & more power
2 th0se resP0nsible ones.

—PREMA DEVII RAMIREZ, 14,
PUER2 PRIN. CITY

Be good public officials...Pls STOP
CORRUPTION!!!

—Flobin F. Garbin, 19, Sorsogon

sa bawa't piso pangungurakot nyo
sana maalaala nyo ang mga

Pilipino naghihirap pa rin. Makon-
sensiya sana kayo

—sandra tan, 43, mla

Our politicians should look after
the good of our country, specially
the welfare of our poor people.

—Elma G. Selvado, 35,
Dinalupihan, Bataan

message to the politicians? May
there be less of you.

And may those who remain be in
the mold of our great statesmen
like Senators Salonga, Tanada and
Diokno.

patricia s. Arnedo, 35, Sorsogon

City
POLITICIANS MUST STOP QUAR-
RELING, DEY SHOULD UNITE &
WORK hand in hand to IMPROVE
our AILING ECONOMY. 2 the
POLITICIANS: DEY SHOULD
ADDRESS d PROBLEMS of their CON-
STITUENTS, NOT just deir PERSON-
AL INTEREST dat dey are FOCUS-
ING..

—francis del moral, 29, san
fabian pangasinan

they shuld change their ways. Do
good 4 d country. Make sacrifices
4 a better future. Wherever they
go, what they did will haunt
them..

—doris sana, 45, zamboanga

sana naman pag tiyagaan pa sila
ni LORD!

—mando rugas, 43, davao city

i hope Gma wud resign so dat we
gain peace politically, economi-
cally and nationally.

—lourdes icalia, 44,
santolan, mla

sna magbago na sila di puro pag-
nanakaw at sarili lang ang icipin
nila. Icipin naman nila ang mga
taon naghahalat sa kanila

—Angelito Bautista, 36,
cabanatuan city

ULTIMATE SACRIFICE.

—IVY AVELINO, 30,
DAGAMI, LEYTE

Failures are misjudgments of self-
interests. Phil politics is failing 2

its nadir.U 2 r "part of d main". Pls
review ur self-interest.

—rene locsin, QC

Set aside politics, unity amidst
adversities and work for the com-
mon good of their constituents.

—Greg Sarao, Intramuros,
Manila

a new year comes new challenges.
People rely on every decision u
make. Make each one of them the
best.

—Federico Gatchalian, 23,
taguig

sa pagpasok ng bagong taon sana
namay as bigyang-diin ang pan-
gagailangan ng karamihan at di
ang sariling interes lamang.

—marie joy quisquisan, 27, ili-
gan city

even if d people seEm 2 have lost
faith or trust in u, you shld stil do
sumthing, dis couNtry n its pPol
stil NEEDS u..

—danielle Padilla, 16, ccf, l

a unionN

never mind if u cant faithfully
serve ur constituents, but faith-
fully serve d LORD!

—alex, puer2 prncesa

may they do their jobs, or better,
if they already do

—my catangay, 16, pasig

A simple wish to all politicians
PLEASE UNITE for

progress n SUPPORT our govt!

Peso ascending on 2006's 1st trading day: 52.80 to dollar

From page A1

"The outlook on the Philippines continues to be positive," Avante said.

He noted that banks scrambled to sell dollars ahead of the long weekend in anticipation of pent-up inflows, thus exerting upward pressure on the local currency.

Avante said the next major support level for the peso would be between 52.75 and 52.80:\$1.

Tax reforms

President Macapagal-Arroyo said that not only record-high remittances from Filipinos overseas were making the peso stronger but also the growing confidence of foreign investors in her administration's ability to turn around the country's chronic fiscal malaise.

"I am glad to report to you that in the first working day of 2006, the peso continues to strengthen closer to 52 to the dollar. This is due not only to the money sent by OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) but also to our tax reforms," said President Arroyo in a televised conference at Kalayaan Hall in Malacañang.

The President was referring to last year's fiscal reform package anchored on the expansion of the value-added tax, which foreign and local experts said would boost government revenues and cut government borrowings.

"With the decrease in the government deficit, the confidence in our economy is growing and capital is flowing in from abroad," the President said.

"This is now the time to cement the confidence of foreign investors in our country. Let us show them that we will not retreat from our reforms and that we will unite to push forward economic development," she said.

Peso to remain strong

The Development Bank of Singapore, in a recent commentary, estimated that for every 1 percentage point increase in OFW remittances, the peso appreciates by about 0.04 or 2 centavos.

DBS expects the peso to stay strong and the BSP to keep key overnight interest rates steady should remittances continue to flow vigorously and an upgrade of credit ratings remains possible.

"However, the spread of local rates over US rates continues to narrow, leaving the currency vulnerable to domestic, economic and political risks," DBS said.

"Furthermore, although inflation has stabilized and core inflation eased, the central bank remains wary of inflationary pressures with the implementation of the VAT (expanded value-added tax)," DBS said.

The BSP may tighten its overnight rates by 50 basis points, particularly in the first quarter of the year when the increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent is implemented, according to DBS.

Revised remittance figures

Tetangco said the BSP may revise upward its projection on remittances from OFWs for this year given the strong performance in 2005. At present, the BSP is expecting an increase of 10 percent in OFW inflows for 2006 from last year.

The BSP estimated that OFW remittances would hit an all-time high of \$12.3 billion in 2005, including those coursed outside the banking system. Of the total, \$10.7 billion or about 87 percent went through the formal channels.

The government assumes that at least 20 percent of total remittances is slipping past the formal channels in its balance of payment computation, but the so-called leakage is slowly being addressed.

Informal channels refer to unlicensed or unregulated operations such as friends of OFWs, acquaintances or other travelers.

Based on the BSP assessment, vigorous marketing efforts by commercial banks, such as enhanced money transfer services, more

remittance centers and tie-ups with foreign financial institutions and collection agents were encouraging more OFWs to send funds into the country through the formal banking channels.

The BSP has been promoting the use of formal financial institutions as these are seen to provide accessible, timely and safe channels for remittance transactions, and help develop better savings habits.

Mexican experience

Based on the Mexican experience, remittances held as deposits in the banking system had a beneficial multiplier effect of between two and three times as these could be channeled to investments, including small- and micro-businesses.

From a stop-gap measure initiated by the government to curb unemployment in the 1970s, the deployment of workers overseas has developed into a vital industry, generating foreign exchange bigger than foreign investment inflows.

Some eight million OFWs, about 10 percent of the Philippine population, are deployed abroad. Three million of them are permanent residents of other countries. The five million who are not permanent residents are equivalent to 14 percent of the country's labor force.



voted by reader



SUPER BRAND GOLD 2005

SUPER BRAND PLATINUM 2004

SUPER BRAND GOLD 2003

SUPER BRAND GOLD 2002

SUPER BRAND GOLD 2001

SUPER BRAND GOLD 2000

SUPER BRAND GOLD 1999



Smooth
Advancement
in writing
technology



Superior
ROLLER
BALLPEN



Covering the biggest bang of the 20th century

From page A1

"It won't happen soon," was what Basa got from Dr. Raymundo Punongbayan when he asked the government's chief volcanologist when he thought the long-dormant Pinatubo would reawaken.

But a source at Clark Air Base, which was then still in the control of the United States, had dropped a hint to Basa.

Monitor Americans

"Monitor the movements of the American troops. When they finally go, that's the danger signal," the source said.

When the exodus did begin just a few days before the "big bang," Basa was positioned at the main gate of the tightly guarded US base and captured the images of GIs streaming out of the camp, their pet cats and dogs in tow.

"D-Day" remains fresh in his mind.

Just before noon of June 12, Basa was headed for Clark to cover the Independence Day rites. When he reached the gate of his subdivision in San Fernando, however, he realized that he had forgotten his cameras. He dispatched the tricycle driver to get his equipment from his house.

"I had a gut feel that something was going to happen that day. My two cameras were ready," he said.

Already he could see people in panic as he approached the corner of the Holy Angel University in Angeles City.

"They were walking south, away from a gray cloud that was hovering above the city and expanding fast westward from the dome of the Sto. Rosario Church," he said.

With cameras slung over his neck and shoulder, Basa climbed the Glo-Ann building which was still under construction.

"Even as I climbed up the steps, I was setting the lens. On the third floor, I stepped on fresh cement. My feet sank, but I paid no heed. I took two shots using the telephoto and five shots with the wide angle [lens]," he said.

No cell phones yet

He then went to a nearby police station to call the INQUIRER desk but the station had no long-distance call capability. He then went to City Hall, but again failed to place a call.

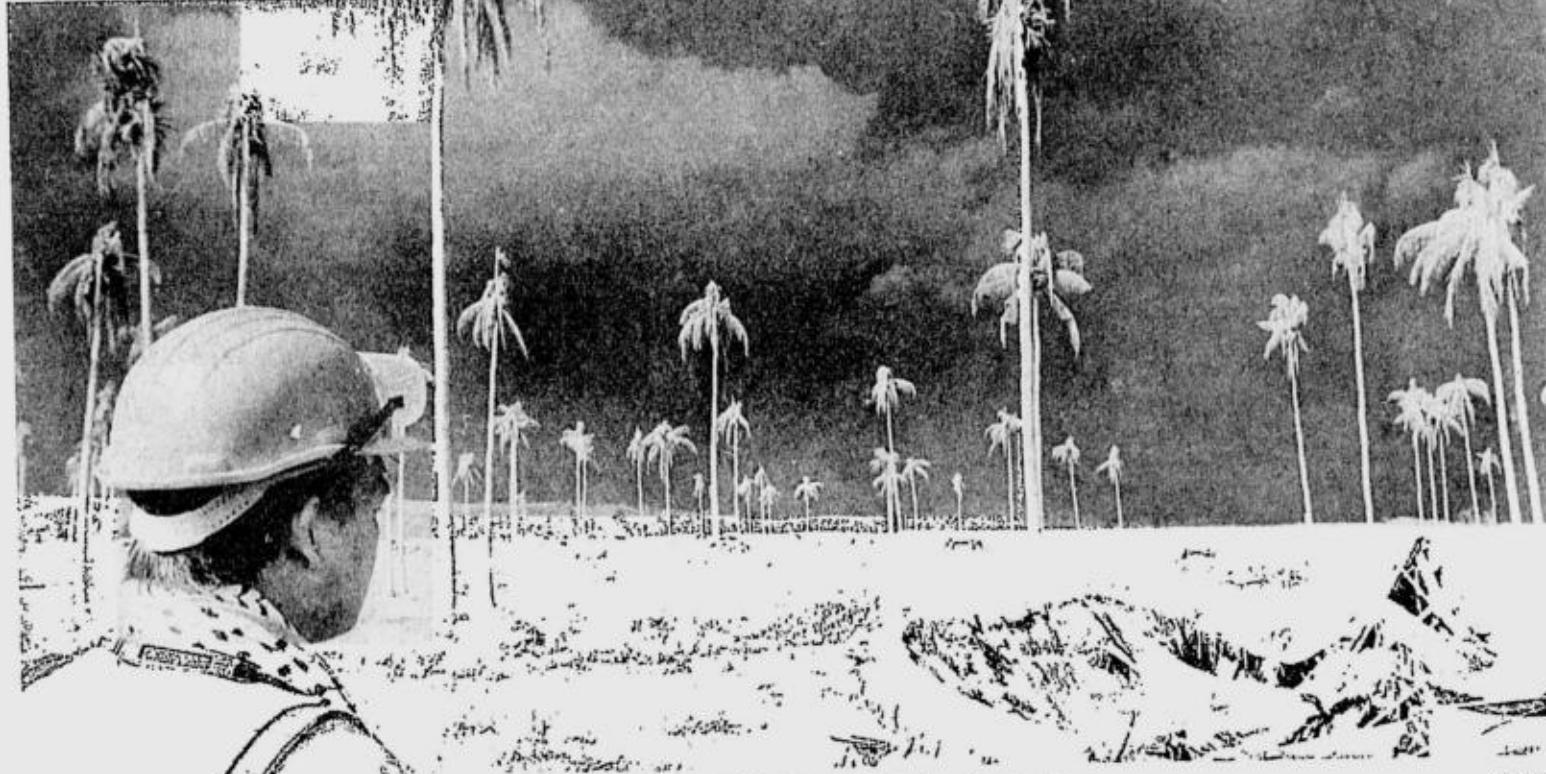
He took a jeepney, sat himself in front beside the driver, his camera at the ready, just in case. He thought he would try to use the phone at the Coca Cola Bottling Co. in Barangay Balite, but was stopped by a security guard. Luckily, he was recognized by a company employee who gave him access to a phone.

He was able to get through to Nilo Paurom, the city editor at the time.

"Perhaps sensing my feelings of inadequacy, Nilo told me as I proceeded to give him the details of what I saw: 'Basa, use Tagalog or English, just don't tell your story in Kapampangan ... and send the photos immediately,'" he said.

There were no digital cameras or e-mail at the time. Basa placed two rolls of film in an envelope and hailed a Philippine Rabbit bus. The bus took the rolls to the station near the Odeon Theater on Rizal Avenue where a staffer from the INQUIRER, whose offices were then on UN Avenue in Ermita, collected them.

Confident that he had met his deadline, Basa proceeded to the Shanghai Restaurant in Angeles City, a journalist watering hole. He sat quiet-



WINTERLAND OF DEVASTATION: Post-eruption landscape of Sitio Oguec, Botolan, Zambales.

ly sipping the free coffee as colleagues boasted of their best photos and stories that day.

The next day, he was out early and grabbing copies of the INQUIRER. The story hit the front page, and his photos were on the inside pages.

Basa realized he was no longer just a photographer. He had become a reporter.

"Collectively, the local photographers and reporters beat their international and Metro Manila-based counterparts despite lacking the facilities and equipment. We delivered. We were soon being called the Pinatubo Boys," he said.

Basa and three other local reporters then went to Porac where from the town hall he could see steam coming out of the volcano. The evacuation of the town had started and relief goods were beginning to trickle in.

Bracing himself for the worst, Basa set up a two-way radio and antenna system in his home. He also noted down the radio frequency of all the police and local officials of the affected towns.

The climactic eruption occurred just after lunch on June 15.

"Gu-du-gu-dong was the sound I frequently heard. Fred Roxas (of the Manila Bulletin) exclaimed, 'Magugunaw na ang mundo' (It's the end of the world). It began to rain ash, sand, stones and wet mud even as a storm raged. We were in Sta. Cruz, Porac, when this happened. We had to get off our Volkswagen Beetle several times to wipe the ash off the windshield. There was an earthquake occurring almost every minute," he said.

Dilemma

Soon, Basa found himself grappling with a dilemma. Should he first see to the safety of his family and go to the rescue of the relatives of his colleague, Lincoln Balyut, whose house had caved in from the weight of the wet volcanic debris? Or should he go on taking photographs and filing stories?

"I decided to put the safety of my children first," Basa said. He sent his family off to Caloocan City, packing 17 family members in-

to a jeep, which to him was miracle enough.

Paurom was furious the next morning.

"Basa, it took 600 years for this volcano to erupt again, and you weren't there for it?" Paurom thundered on the phone.

But apparently aware of Basa's self-doubts, Paurom also took care to assure the correspondent that he was there to help.

Resourceful

"Nilo really pushed me. I was mainly a photographer, not a writer. I can capture images through my camera, not through words. With Nilo's encouragement, I decided I was going to be a reporter," Basa said.

And he proved to be a very resourceful one too. To inject color into his stories, he monitored the exchange of communications between village officials and the disaster councils via two-way radio. Always, he had two recorders recording the conversations which he would then transcribe.

This was how Basa got wind of reports of an outbreak of diarrhea in evacuation centers in Porac and Floridablanca towns.

The trust that he had cultivated among his news sources also helped a lot. He got the food shortage story from social welfare officer Susan Dimabuyu.

"She earned the ire of some of her superiors because of my story. But she told the truth and stood by it," he said.

Occasionally, the local reporters would feast on ready-to-eat food packages that they would learn later were excess supplies from the US military's Operation Desert Storm in Iraq.

Like thousands of horses

He also learned how to stake out stories, particularly the deadly lahar rampages, the images of which still haunt him like a surreal dream.

"In Porac, lahar came like the sound of thousands of horses in a violent stampede. It flowed in smooth, thick waves, leaving trails of steam and the pungent smell of sulfur," Basa said.

He also saw death, particularly of the people who were scalded and buried by lahar at Baranay Maliwai in Bacolor town on Oct. 1, 1995.

He said he could not forget a dialogue in Bacolor a few weeks before the Oct. 1 lahar rampage that buried the town.

Punongbayan was right

"At the San Guillermo church, Punongbayan told the town's residents that he was 95 percent sure that lahar would bury the town, that the Pasig-Potrero River was the most dangerous pathway. He warned the residents to leave town, only to be told off by one man: 'Ta Dios ka? Ot balu mu ing malyari tekami?' (Are you God? Why do you know what's going to happen to us?)." Punongbayan, who remained cool and unfailingly helpful, was to be proven right," Basa said.

Basa noted that the job of reporting was relatively more difficult at the time.

"With no computers or mobile phones, I had to be resourceful and improvise wherever I was when the deadline came," he said in a mixture of Filipino and English.

He would always have copies of the INQUIRER with him to show people his byline so he would be allowed the use of a phone. And he would get free snacks that way too.

'For the people'

He said proudly that he never allowed the INQUIRER to be out-scooped.

"I believe in what I do. During a time of need, I think I did my part for the province by reporting the events as best I could. The late Joe Marquez of the Manila Times had a phrase for journalists' commitment—'Para sa tao' (For the people)," he said.

Basa said the experience of reporting on the Pinatubo eruption and its aftermath was "priceless."

"Other journalists haven't gone through that. But were it not for my editors, especially Nilo, I wouldn't have delivered. I owe him a lot," he said.

from the Philippines finding their way to Hong Kong, Singapore and Brunei.

"Having survived natural hazards for millennia, sea turtles are now under severe threat from human activity," the WWF said.

The biggest threats come from dynamite fishing, indiscriminate harvesting of eggs, conversion of the sandy areas where turtles nest to resorts and other commercial facilities.

Mundita Lim, assistant director of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, said the IOSEA agreement was crucial to the protection of marine turtles because it required parallel and intergovernmental measures.

"The Philippines is a major pathway of the pawikan," Lim said. "It would be useless to protect the migratory species if the other range states do not protect them."

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Not only for dogs, 2006 is also Year of the Turtle

From page A1

a symbolic turning point and the first time the problems of marine turtles were seriously discussed among so many governments with a common commitment to take action," said Douglas Hykke, head of the UN Secretariat overseeing the implementation of the IOSEA agreement.

5 of 7 species here in RP

Of the seven known species of marine turtles in the world, five are found in the Philippines. The loggerhead, leatherback, olive ridley, hawksbill and green turtle.

The Turtle Islands off the coast of Palawan are identified as among the most important conservation sites for the endangered marine turtles.

The Turtle Islands, named so because

their rare marine inhabitants, straddle the border of Malaysia and the Philippines.

Of the nine islands belonging to this group, six—Boan, Taganak, Bakukungan, Lihiman, Langan and Baguan—are managed by the Philippines while three are managed by Malaysia.

Heritage park nesting site

The Philippine and Malaysian governments established the Turtle Islands Heritage Park (Tihpa), declared a sanctuary for the marine turtles, in 1996. The Tihpa is jointly managed by the two countries.

The Tihpa is Southeast Asia's largest remaining nesting site for green turtles. About 80 percent of the turtle nestings in the Philippines are on the six islands, according to the World Wildlife Fund, which has been doing

conservation efforts on the Turtle Islands for almost two decades.

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MILF sees peace with gov't this year

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT (MILF) has expressed optimism that the eight-year-old peace process with the government would be completed this year.

Mohaqqem Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, said both parties are expected to wrap up talks on ancestral domain and face the final

agenda of the peace process—to find a just, lasting and comprehensive negotiated political solution to the so-called Bangsamoro

problem in Mindanao.

"The prospect of (attaining) peace has become more realistic this year as the two parties, despite the off-and-on controversies, like recruitment and training of new MILF members, are zeroing in on a negotiated political settlement as the only civilized and practical solution to this conflict," Iqbal said.

Iqbal and his counterpart in the government, Silvestre Afable, were supposed to resume talks last December but Malaysia opted to postpone it due to the Asean Summit.

The next meeting, tentatively scheduled later this month, would still be exploratory but Iqbal described it to be a preview

of the final talks.

"We will bring in a power house delegation that will include the five-man MILF peace panel, the secretariat and its 12-man technical working group," he said.

He, however, refused to give a timeline, claiming both parties are prepared anytime but

Malaysia, which has been hosting the talks since 2001, would give the go signal.

Assessing the peace process, Iqbal said both sides have been showing increasing trust and confidence with each other, and are confident they could overcome obstacles along the way. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Inside job seen in P4-M heist at PNCC office

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Police investigators are considering a possible "inside job" in last Sunday's robbery at the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) field office in Calamba City wherein 15 heavily-armed suspects clad in police uniforms took away P4 million cash and nine handguns of the company's security guards.

Supt. Reynato Alberto, deputy chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Calabarzon, said their initial investigation revealed that the robbery seemed to have been well planned.

He said it also looked like the suspects knew where the cash vaults were and who among the PNCC employees knew the number combination of the vaults.

"It seemed that the suspects exactly knew where to go. Hindi na naga sila nagtingin-tingin pa sa ibang lugar sa loob ng compound (They did not look at other places inside the compound)," Alberto told the INQUIRER in an interview at his office.

He said they were still gathering statements from the eight employees, including four security guards, who were at the office when the robbery took place.

Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, Calabarzon police director, had already created a special investigation team led by Supt. Rodrigo Agojo, chief of the Regional Special Operations Group, to solve the robbery case.

Verzosa said the suspects, wearing uniforms of the police Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, arrived at the PNCC office near the Silangan exit of the South Luzon Expressway at about 12:10 a.m. on board three vehicles.

He said the suspects identified themselves as members of the local police to duty guard Florencio Ablaya, 35, and added that they were just responding to a reported shooting in the area.

After they were allowed entrance, the suspects quickly disarmed the unsuspecting guard and proceeded to the security guards' station where they hogtied Ablaya and two other duty guards.

Three of the suspects then went to the collection division of the PNCC and ordered cashier Marilyn Vendaval, teller Isabela Agduyang, clerk Flor Valdez, and supervisor Raul Saluson to lie face down on the floor. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



MANPOWER

There is no substitute for cooperation when nature strikes as these men show when they put together their strengths to remove boulders to clear a road in Talibon, Bontoc following a landslide. It took them three and a half hours to clear the road.

EDWIN BACASMAS

GMA asks mayors to enforce uniform house design in terraces

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

quired them to redesign their houses according to 30 suggestions derived from the original Ifugao huts of the 15th, 17th and 19th centuries.

Ms Arroyo told reporters at the Mansion here on Saturday that she also asked the mayors to relocate "informal settlers" of the terraces to lands that would be identified by Environment Secretary Michael Defensor.

But this suggestion may also raise some problems because those "settlers" are the actual owners of the terraces, said Purification Molintas, Cordillera tourism director.

Molintas said everyone in the Cordillera is considered an "informal settler" because of outdated land titling rules that restrict ownership of steep-sloped lands

and because of forestry laws that have categorized most Cordillera property as part of the national forest reserve.

Ms Arroyo, who toured the rice terraces of Banaue and Hungduan towns on Saturday, said her annual trip to the terraces energized her spirit because of Ifugao's cordial reception. "I'm an expert already in the rice terraces," she said.

This familiarity, she said, had emboldened her to bring along friends and dignitaries to Ifugao as often as she could.

Molintas said the President was concerned about the area's overall aesthetics.

The country is hosting the Asian Tourism Forum in two weeks, and Molintas has been tasked with hosting a sub-minis-

terial meeting in Banaue, home of the Battad terraces that are more popular because these have been used in postcards.

But newly built view decks do not hide poverty in the area, the official said. Ifugao is among the poorest provinces.

Molintas said the master plan would reintroduce indigenous knowledge to the communities to improve local economy.

She said the uniform design proposals for houses in the terraces were not meant to be superficial.

Molintas said the President took her first look at a 15th century mummy, whose features were reconstructed by Cheryl Young, a forensic anthropologist of the University of Wyoming.

ments obtained by the INQUIRER.

Revitalize Indigenous Cordilleran Entrepreneurs Inc. (Rice), a non-government organization, has started organizing terrace farmers in Ifugao because of American and Canadian interest in organic indigenous rice.

Also on Saturday, Ms Arroyo ordered the National Museum to relinquish control of a museum to the local government of Kabayan, Benguet. The museum houses the famous Benguet mummies.

Molintas said the President took her first look at a 15th century mummy, whose features were reconstructed by Cheryl Young, a forensic anthropologist of the University of Wyoming.

Plans for repairing the terraces, for example, draw heavily from anthropological reconstructions of indigenous irrigation systems that are crucial to making these terraces produce abundant rice again, according to docu-

ments obtained by the INQUIRER.

"Of course, I was so worried since we climbed at about 1 p.m. At about 4 or 5 p.m., I could sense that my two friends were already lost. I was so glad I stayed at the nearby St. Peter's Chapel where there were people who helped me," she said.

In an interview at the hotel, Bal and Coquelin said they never lost hope of finding their way out of the unfamiliar trails they trekked.

"Aside from shouting for help, we even used the flash of my camera to get attention, in case there would be a chopper or local hiker who could see us but to no avail," Coquelin, a policeman, said.

Bal, a longtime nurse, said they just wanted to look around, have a closer look at Mayon and take some photos. But they got lost.

Gil Francis Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Tourists warned anew vs climbing Mayon

LEGAZPI CITY—LOCAL AUTHORITIES have renewed their warning to tourists, especially foreigners, against climbing the Mayon Volcano as it is still on alert level 2.

The warning came after three French nationals were reported lost on Saturday but came back safe on Sunday after 12 hours of trekking to Camp One of the Mayon Volcano without a local guide, map and flashlight, and the knowledge of concerned authorities.

Arnel Capili, Office of the Civil Defense regional director, said it was fortunate that the French were safe, for most foreigners who climb Mayon seek local guides, coordinate with barangay officials, and even ask the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council and the Provincial Tourism Council for permits to climb.

For the first time in the history of climbing the perfect cone

shaped Mayon Volcano, two of the three French nationals spent their New Year's Eve at Camp One of the 2,468-meter high volcano after they got lost.

Amazingly, they returned back safe at the Legazpi Tourist Inn in the city proper at about 7 a.m. on Sunday without the knowledge of local authorities that assembled a joint rescue operation.

Florence Bal and Alexie Coquelin of France were able to reach the 821-meter high Camp One of Mount Mayon.

Equipped only with a bottle of distilled water, bananas, one shirt each and a camera, Bal and Coquelin said they experienced coldness, hunger and scratches—and even panicked a bit when they got stuck for the first time in their trek.

Thanks to their friend, Sophie Germond, who decided to stay behind at Barangay

Buayan, local authorities from the OCD, Public Safety Office and 40 local volunteers were easily informed about the two French hikers.

But it was only on Sunday that operatives of the responding agencies laid out their plans for a rescue operation, including using a helicopter.

To their surprise, however, they found the two already back safely at the hotel.

It was the first time for Bal and Coquelin to climb Mount Mayon. The two and Germond were here to spend the holidays by not only climbing Mayon but also going scuba diving at Ticao Island in Masbate to have an encounter with manta rays.

Germond, a dentist by profession, said she was very thankful she did not lose her senses. She immediately asked the help of the villagers in contacting local authorities that could provide im-

mediate assistance.

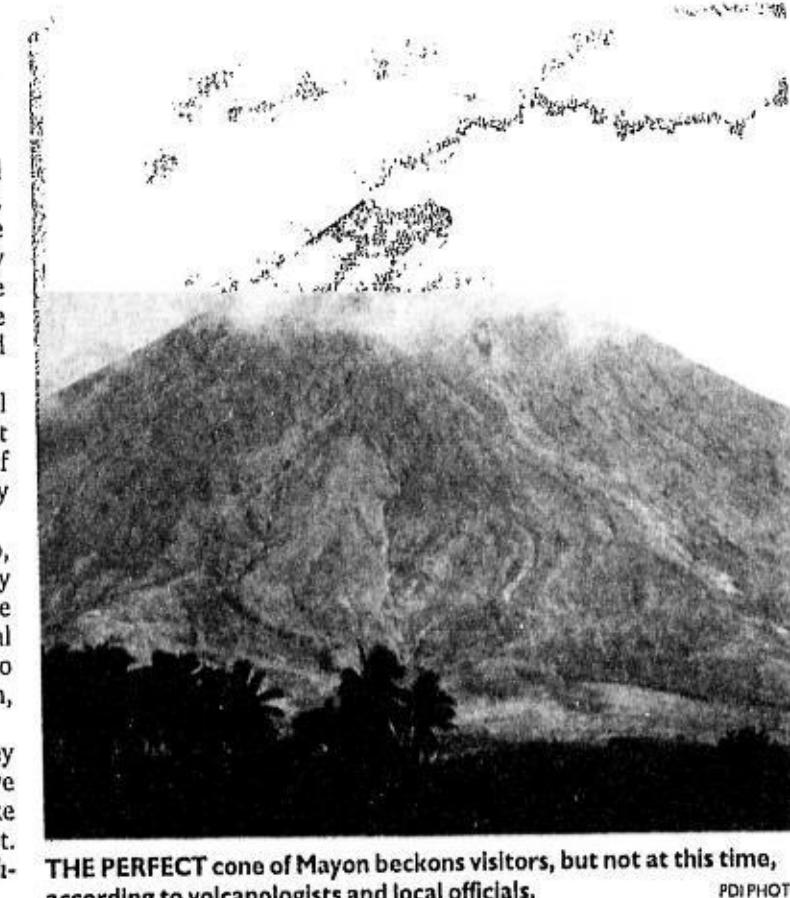
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Bal, a longtime nurse, said they just wanted to look around, have a closer look at Mayon and take some photos. But they got lost.

Gil Francis Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



THE PERFECT cone of Mayon beckons visitors, but not at this time, according to volcanologists and local officials.

PDI PHOTO

PAO wants NBI to probe murder convict's death

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE CHIEF OF THE PUBLIC ATTORNEYS OFFICE (PAO) will push for the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to probe the death of a man who had been convicted for the murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. and his alleged assassin, Rolando Galman, in 1983.

"I will request the (Department of Justice) to order the NBI to conduct an investigation of the incident, and also how the alleged shooter managed to bring a pistol and a knife inside the (New Bilibid Prisons) compound," PAO chief counsel Percida Acosta said yesterday.

Acosta said the NBI inquiry shall determine whether the killing of former Airman First Class Cordova G. Estelo was plainly the consequence of a prison scuffle, or if something deeper was behind it.

Estelo was among the 16 Aviation Security Command (Avsecom) soldiers who had been sentenced to double life imprisonment in 1990 for the death of Aquino and Galman.

"It could be part of (a plan to liquidate) all

the Aquino-Galman convicts to silence them," said Acosta.

Estelo was stabbed dead by another inmate, Manuel Ocenar, on Saturday inside the NBP maximum compound.

Acosta said Estelo's death may be part of a plot to kill those involved in the Aquino-Galman double murder, with the recent issuance of an arrest warrant against Capt. Felipe Valerio, the head of the Avsecom team sent to arrest Aquino at the tarmac of the Manila International Airport on Aug. 21, 1983.

The lawyer believed the convicts could implicate Valerio in the assassination plot and at the same time prove that they were merely fall guys. Hence, if they were to be "liquidated," there would be nobody left to testify, she added.

Acosta said she would also ask the DOJ to consider transferring the 14 remaining Aquino-Galman convicts to the NBP's minimum security compound for "humanitarian considerations."

Eva Tomenio, Estelo's sister, said that the last time she visited him in prison, he had

talked excitedly about being set free.

"He was very vibrant when I last talked to him, because he was hoping that very soon, he could go out on parole ... he was already [eligible] for clemency for the time that he had already served," Tomenio told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Despite the repeated denial of their appeals for a new trial with the discovery of new evidence in the case, the convicted soldiers, including Estelo, have maintained their innocence.

Tomenio said she last saw Estelo on Dec. 22, when she and the other Aquino-Galman murder convicts had treated him to a belated birthday celebration. He had turned 58 two days earlier, a non-visit day at the NBP.

"(He wouldn't have died) had they been granted clemency. They are not murderers, they were only used by some people," she said.

On Sunday afternoon, Estelo finally got his wish. Tomenio took his body home to Bayang Luma, Imus, Cavite. Interment has been tentatively set on Saturday, at the Manila Memorial Park in Dasmarinas.

Victim had wondered why Ver congratulated them on day Ninoy died

THE DEATH OF CORDOVA G. Estelo brings down to 14 the number of surviving Aviation Security Command (Avsecom) soldiers who were convicted for the 1983 murder of opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino Jr. and Rolando Galman, the man that the military had tagged as Aquino's assassin.

Their senior officer, Avsecom chief Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio, died of cancer in 1991. Airman First Class Cordova G. Estelo of the Avsecom SWAT Team Alpha admitted to shooting Galman, but told the Fact-Finding Agrava Board in 1983 that there was no "shoot to kill" order. He said they were told to shoot "if an attacker had a gun, [or] to arrest if unarmed."

According to the Agrava report, Estelo said he had seen his teammates firing at Galman and had joined in because he thought Galman was the enemy. Estelo also rode in the van that brought Aquino's body to Fort Bonifacio, and remembered

touching Aquino's hand in the van.

In a 2003 INQUIRER interview, he said it "pained" him to learn of the theory that Aquino may have been hit on the head inside the van to make sure he was dead.

But he said he had always wondered why, on the day of the murders, the then Armed Forces chief Gen. Fabian Ver went up to their team to congratulate them.

The highest-ranking officer of the group now would be Avsecom intelligence director Capt. Romeo Bautista.

The rest are Sgt. Pablo Martinez; 2nd Lt. Jesus Castro; Technical Sgt. Filomeno Miranda; Sergeants Claro Lat and Arnulfo de Mesa; Constables First Class Mario Lazaga and Rogelio Moreno (who was tagged by the Sandiganbayan as Aquino's killer); SWAT Team Alpha Sergeants Rodolfo Desolong, Ernesto Mateo, Rolando de Guzman, Ruben Aquino, Arnulfo Arantes and AIC Felizardo Taran.

— Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research

Lim, Manila policemen pay tribute to Barbers

By Margaux C. Ortiz

"HE WAS ABOVE THE ORDINARY LAW ENFORCER, KNOWING POLICE WORK FROM A-Z."

With these words, Sen. Alfredo Lim and other retired and active policemen welcomed back former Sen. Robert "Bobby" Barbers to the Manila Police District (MPD) headquarters, where he had established his reputation as an outstanding police officer and investigator.

"He was a good man, a devoted police officer," Lim told the INQUIRER, wistfully looking at Barbers' dark brown coffin which was draped with a Philippine flag.

Lim, who worked with Barbers at the Manila Police Department, then called the Western Police District, for 15 years, said the former senator began his law enforcement career as a beat patrolman.

Barbers' dedication to his job and exception-

al investigative skills led to his recognition as one of the Ten Outstanding Policemen of the Philippines (TOPP) in 1981, Lim said.

As MPD chief, Lim appointed Barbers as the commander of the Ermita Police Station, where he "did a good job in closing down illegal nightclubs and bars."

He added that Barbers was also responsible for bringing to justice the members of the notorious Pandatug Gang, a family of bank robbers who terrorized the metropolis and nearby provinces.

Lim said that as a police major detailed at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Barbers also help bring dreaded drug lord Don Pepe Oyson's case to a close.

Barbers died on Christmas Day of heart failure at the age of 61. He will be buried on Wednesday at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Parañaque.

METROBRIEFS

Preferential treatment



A RESOLUTION urging owners of shopping malls, schools, and airports to reserve parking space for expectant mothers has been passed on second reading by the Quezon City council. Authored by Restituto

Malangen and 12 other councilors, the resolution further urges owners of public and private buildings, sports and recreation centers and similar establishments, to always give pregnant women access to suitable parking spots. The resolution also covers seating spaces in establishments like movie theaters and restaurants. "A child-bearing mother should be given appropriate care and attention," said the proponents of the resolution. They also expressed hope that the measure would help an expectant mother "through the nine months of her pregnancy and enhance her welfare and the well-being of the child in her womb."

DJ Yap

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

High-tech security in banks

IT'S HIGH TIME that banks implement high-tech security measures against robbers, according to Quezon City councilors. Alarm systems are not enough to deter bank robbers nowadays, according to Resty

Malangen and four other councilors. The way to go is a closed-circuit television monitoring system, they said. The city lawmakers have filed a proposed ordinance requiring bank owners to use not only an alarm system connected to a police station, but also a surveillance system to detect the movements of would-be robbers. A closed-circuit TV monitoring system can make it easier for investigators to identify bank robbers or even stop them before they can make a move, the councilors said. The security device can also prove useful in case the alarm system fails to operate, they added. Under the proposed measure, bank owners shall be required to equip their banks with alarms and a closed-circuit TV monitoring system.

DJ Yap



MANILA Police District Director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong led his men in according arrival honors yesterday to the body of former Sen. Robert Barbers. Barbers started as a beat patrolman at the police district, then known as the Western Police District.

VACC: Implement death penalty now

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WORRIED ABOUT THE "WORSENING peace and order situation" in the country, an anti-crime group has reiterated an old wish for the new year.

For the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC), this is the time to resume the imposition of the death penalty.

"We are appealing to President Macapagal-Arroyo to implement the death penalty law," VACC head Dante Jimenez said.

The group renewed its call after the killing of Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon on Saturday.

"This now the time to implement the law. Judges are being killed left and right. Journalists are being killed. Ordinary citizens are being killed like chickens," Jimenez said.

He was at the wake of Gingoyon in Bacoor, Cavite yesterday afternoon.

He said that Gingoyon was the 10th judge to be killed in the last six years.

Jailed former President Joseph Estrada had declared a moratorium

on judicial executions in 2001 after putting seven convicts to death between 1998 and 1999.

Ms Arroyo continued the ban when she replaced Estrada in 2001.

Jimenez said he has already spoken to Ms Arroyo about the reimposition of the death penalty.

Gingoyon, 53, of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 117, was shot dead by one of two men on board a motorcycle on Dec. 30 as he was walking home in Barangay Molino, Bacoor, Cavite.

My New Year's wishes and resolution

EVERYBODY HAS WISHES OR RESOLUTIONS for the New Year.

My wishes and resolution are simple.

Let's start with my resolution: I will avoid cursing on my radio program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo."

However, my not cursing will be predicated on the fast action of government agencies and people handling the investigations into citizens' complaints against abusive law enforcers.

Government apathy or inaction on abuses committed by people who are sworn to serve and protect the citizenry makes one curse.

One of my New Year's wishes is addressed to the following agencies: National Police Commission (Napocom); Internal Affairs Service (IAS) of the police; People's Law Enforcement Board (PLEB); and the different units within the Philippine National Police (PNP) that investigate complaints of abuses by its personnel: Please dispose of cases promptly.

Another New Year's wish is addressed to Malolos, Bulacan Judge Andres Soriano, in whose hands have been transferred the rape case against Jeff Quesada, a complete paraplegic.

Jeff's case is one for Ripley's.

The original judge trying the case, Maria Belen Ringpis-Liban, apparently couldn't tell a quadriplegic or complete paraplegic from a "normal" person, and so delayed action on the case

ON TARGET



Ramon Tulfo

for more than two years. However, she had the good sense to inhibit herself from the case after being severely criticized in this space.

So, to Judge Soriano: Is it asking too much to plead for a fast resolution of Jeff's rape case?

Jeff, who can't go to the toilet without being carried by two men, has already spent three Christmases in jail.

And still another wish is addressed to the Napolcom and the Quezon City Regional Trial Court handling the frame-up case against city six cops filed by a mechanic, Ricky Romualdo.

Romualdo was found innocent of peddling drugs by another Quezon City court and freed after languishing for one year in jail.

With the help of my public service program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," Romualdo has filed a case for "planting" [evidence] under the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act against the cops. The new law imposes the death penalty on cops who "plant" drugs on innocent citizens.

Policemen receiving or investigating

complaints from citizens should show a little sympathy toward crime victims or families of the victims.

PO3 Florencio Escobido did no such thing when he handled the twin murders of brothers Froilan and Arnold Jimeno. He was even rude to the victims' relatives.

The Jimenos were killed in cold blood by Quezon City police Senior Insp. Michael Sanchez after a traffic incident. Another brother, Ferdinand, 39, died of a heart attack upon learning of his brothers' deaths.

Investigator Escobido allegedly demanded merienda and transportation money from the wives of the victims. He also unashamedly used the widows' cellular phones for his personal calls.

"He treated us like we were the suspects," said Marilou, wife of Froilan, a referee of the Philippine Basketball League (PBL).

While Escobido was rude to the wives of the murder victims, the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) was handling suspect Sanchez with kid gloves.

Sanchez, assigned to the QCPD mobile patrol unit, was allowed to roam around the criminal investigation division unguarded.

It was only after my program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," complained about the VIP treatment being given Sanchez that the police senior inspector was placed behind bars.



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Year of the Dog off to fiery start

By Margaux C. Ortiz
 and Nancy C. Carvajal

ONLY TWO DAYS INTO THE NEW YEAR, dubbed as the Year of the Fire Dog in the Chinese calendar, firemen are already finding things too hot to handle.

After battling three fires in Manila and Mandaluyong on Jan. 1, firefighters were hard at work again yesterday morning, putting out three fires that broke out in Manila and Caloocan City.

In Tondo, Manila, a Chinese-Filipino couple were killed after a fire gutted their rented home.

FO1 Guillermo Fernalino Jr. identified the victims as Lorenzo and Virginia Ngo, of Room 601, Josefa Building, No. 587 corner Padre Rada and Ilaya Streets.

The couple's four children survived the fire, the arson investigator said in his report.

Fernalino said witnesses saw thick black smoke coming from Rooms 601 and 604 occupied by another family at 4:36 a.m.

The fire destroyed P100,000 worth of property at the seven-story residential and com-

mercial building before it was put out at 6:30 a.m.

Fernalino said they are still investigating the cause of the fire.

Less than an hour after the fire in Tondo began, a smaller fire destroyed P10,000 worth of property in Binondo, Manila.

The fire, which started at 5:15 a.m., destroyed the mezzanine of the four-story residential building at 1080 Aguilar St.

The mezzanine was occupied by a certain Stanley Co, fire officials said.

The fire reached the third alarm before it was put out at 6:54 a.m.

Nobody was reportedly injured in the second incident, arson investigators said.

Meanwhile, the quick reaction of residents in a densely populated area prevented more damage to property when fire struck an abandoned shanty in Caloocan City, an arson investigator said.

"The immediate action of the residents using the 'timba' brigade slowed down the spread of the fire which could have caused more destruction," said SFO2 Zoilo Crisostomo.

Crisostomo said the fire broke out around 7:10 a.m. at 6457 Libis Espina St., Barangay 18, left at least 10 families homeless.

Except for a 70-year-old woman who suffered minor burns on the forehead, no other persons were reported injured.

The cause of the fire, which started in a deserted house, has yet to be determined, Crisostomo said. It lasted for almost an hour and damaged at least P9,000 worth of property.

However, several residents claimed that the abandoned hours was sometimes being used by some unidentified persons "for a pot session."

The fire was the second one to hit the city since the start of the new year.

The first fire occurred at around 12:10 a.m. on Jan. 1 and gutted part of a warehouse along Tanigue St., Da-gat-dagatan, Caloocan City.

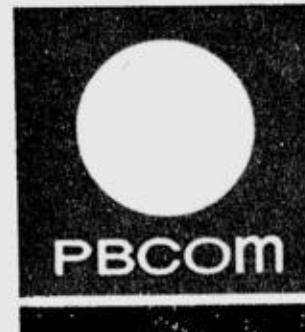
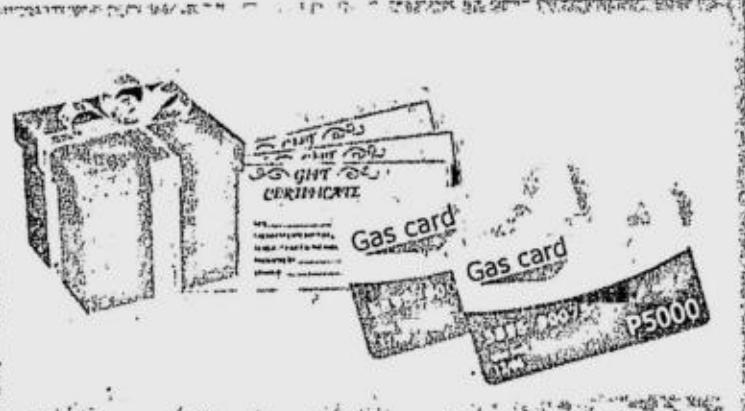


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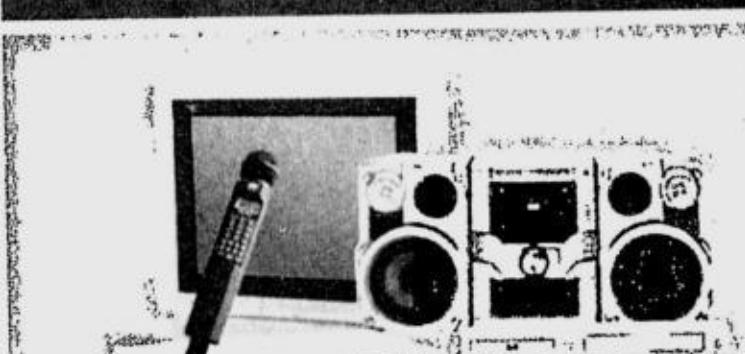
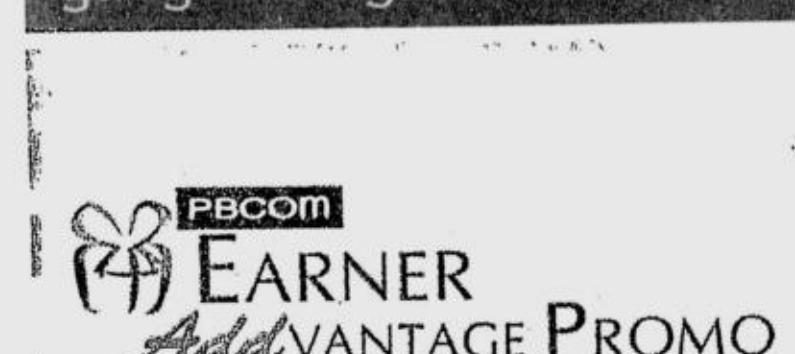
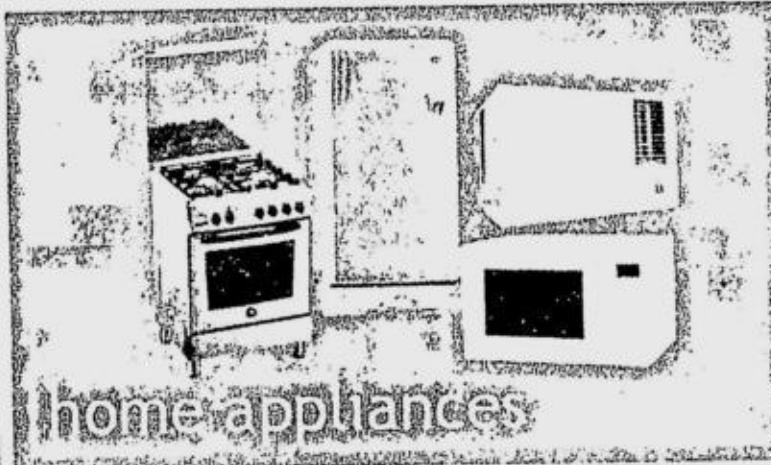
Children enjoy the last day of the holiday season by going on a fun ride at a carnival in Quezon City. Tomorrow, most of them will go back to school as the Christmas break comes to a close.

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■ Alcantara tops U-14 Asian Masters /A18



■ Winning Martina return /A19



WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Wade, Shaq lead Heat past listless T'wolves

/A19



■ I was framed in '88, claims Ben Johnson /A19

Juvic, 9 others set out for big Tour mission

By Jong Arcano

LURED BY THE BIG MONEY AT stake in this year's Asian Tour, Juvic Pagunsan and Artemio Murakami will join eight other full-fledged Filipino professionals in the 2006 Qualifying School starting this week in Malaysia.

The mission will not be that easy, though, for Pagunsan and company.

The 10 Filipinos are among a record 600 entries from all over the world vying for a minimum of 40 slots in a two-part qualifying process to be conducted in two different courses in the next two weeks.

Also bidding for their Asian Tour membership cards this season are Cassius Casas, Tony Lascuña, Jerome Delariete, Cookie La'O, Benjie Magada, Robert Pactorin, Mars Pucay and Marlon Dizon.

All 10 RP bets, however, need not go through Stage One at the Palm Resort Golf and Country Club in Senai, Johor and Tanjong Puteri Golf and Country Club in Pasir Gudang, Johor.

They will go straight to the all-important Final Stage which will be held at the Palm Resort from Jan. 11 to 14 where only the top 40 finishers and

ties will gain access to this year's Tour proper, set to become the biggest in history.

The Asian Tour recently announced an unprecedented 32-leg season with record total prize money of \$23 million (P1.22 billion). Eight tournaments offer at least \$1 million in total pot while six are in the \$500,000 to \$900,000 range.

The Philippine Open, tentatively set for May 25 to 28 in Cagayan de Oro City, carries just the minimum prize money of \$200,000.

Pagunsan decided to turn pro after an illustrious amateur career which he capped by winning the individual gold and leading the Philippines to team victory in the SEA Games last month.

Murakami, meanwhile, will be playing in Malaysia after a failed bid in the Japan Tour qualifying where he reached the final stage only to quit midway due to the freezing weather.

Boy Blue Ocampo, who acts as tournament director for the qualifying school, said he has high hopes for the RP entries despite the very tight competition.

"It's going to be like a treasure hunt for everybody in this marathon series," Ocampo told the INQUIRER. "An Asian Tour card will be like gold that will give them a lot of opportunities."

The 40 survivors will join the 60 regular cardholders from last year's Tour, only two of whom are Filipino pros. They are Frankie Mioza and Angelo Que.



PAGUNSAN: Moving on to a bigger stage.

Ex-Sri Lanka champ leads RP Ladies Open field

FIVE YEARS AFTER ROUTING THE FIELD TO become the first Sri Lankan winner of the Philippine Ladies Amateur Open, Thuhachinii Selvaratnam is coming back to shoot for another victory on Jan. 11-13 at the Manila Golf Club.

The 28-year-old Selvaratnam, a native of Colombo who won by eight strokes on her first try in 2000, banners a big roster of 28 foreign entries from seven countries due for the 44th staging of the three-day championship.

Selvaratnam will be up against a youth-laden field many of whom are just in their late teens. They include Woo Young Kyung, last year's runner-up who will lead a potent six-player challenge from Korea.

Other foreign nations represented in the event organized by the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines are England, United States, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Singapore, which is sending its national team.

The tourney, however, will be without reigning titlist Jayvie Agojo and 2004 champion Frances Bondad.

Agojo, the Pepperdine University scholar who won a silver medal in the SEA Games, and Bondad both begged off due to academic pressures especially since they've lost a lot of school time during their SEAG campaign.

Looming as a possible threat to the Sri Lankan is Cristina Corpus, a Fil-American jungolfer from San Leandro California with handicap of +0.7.

The local challenge will be carried by former champion Carmelita Villaroman, Lora Roberto, Crystal Superal, Lucy Landicho, Paulina Sotto and the de Villa sisters, Debbie and Linnel.

Nancy Ortiga, president of WGAP said that despite the absence of Agojo and Bondad, she still expects an exciting battle for the trophy.

The sponsors are First Gentleman Foundation, Phil. Charity Sweepstakes, PSC, Banco de Oro Private Banking, Pacific Online, Gilberto M. Duavit, Golden Donuts, Electrobus, Keystone Lamps, Crucible Gallery, All Transport Network, Carlos Palanca and Hyatt Hotels.

For inquiries, please call the Manila Golf Club ladies locker room or 0917-5295324.

Very tough 'course' for SEA Games hero

By Musong R. Castillo

NOW, THIS ONE IS FOR FAMILY.

After reaping countless accolades for flag and country in a storied amateur career, Juvic Pagunsan flies to Malaysia this week to vie in the Asian Tour's Qualifying School and start playing for the future of his loved ones.

"I cannot ask for anything more as far as my amateur career is concerned," the 27-year-old Pagunsan told the INQUIRER in Filipino as he took a break in practice at Calatagan in Batangas yesterday.

"I think I've served my country well and I'm not getting

any younger. It's time to take the next step and hope to land in the bigger (professional) tours in the future."

It's no secret that Juvic adores his 5-year-old daughter LJ, whom he says is his inspiration.

"She's the reason why I wake up early in the morning to be in the range or in the fairways hitting shots," the former bag-toter at Binintian in Bacolod said. "I want to give her the best life possible, that's why I work so hard."

For finishing tied for fifth in the World Amateurs in Puerto Rico in November 2004 and tying for 15th in the Nomura Cup in Japan last year, the Asian Tour has seeded Pagunsan into the final stage of qualifying on Jan. 11-14.

Pagunsan will play as an amateur so as not lose his direct seeding. If he makes it among the top 40 players, he would then apply for a pro license.

Pagunsan won national tournaments in Malaysia and Thailand and scored a breakthrough in the Philippine amateur after eight fruitless tries. He was the low amateur in the tough Philippine Open at Malarayat and also hoisted the championship trophies in the DHL Amateurs and the Canlubang Am Open.

Not bad for someone who griped about the shabby treatment he received from some golf officials at the start of last year and threatened to abandon the RP squad.

Johnson tries to weave old magic for Beermen

By June Navarro

KWAN JOHNSON HAS A KNACK FOR BAILING out San Miguel Beer every time the Beermen hit rock-bottom.

After ending the classification round with back-to-back losses, the Beermen are reactivating Johnson from the injury roster for their survivor playoff against the Coca-Cola Tigers in the San Mig Coffec-PBA Fiesta Conference.

Johnson sat out SMB's last two games due to a leg injury he suffered after leading the Beermen to a five-game win stretch, a feat no other import



JOHNSON makes another grand return for San Miguel Beer.

has pulled off so far.

Sidelined for more than a week, Johnson was replaced by Kevin Freeman, who was sent home following those twin setbacks.

The 6-foot-3 Johnson took over from Rico Hill and helped the Beermen climb to 6-8 after a 1-7 start.

Before winning five straight games for his team, Johnson also led San Miguel to the 2003 reinforced conference finals against the Tigers after the Beermen opened the conference at 0-5.

"It's still possible but it's going to be tough," said San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico of his chances of defending the crown.

Armed with a twice-to-beat advantage, the eighth-seeded Beermen will need all the luck and magic Johnson could weave over the ninth-ranked Tigers when they dispute a seat in the best-of-three wildcard phase.

Meanwhile, Talk 'N Text is contemplating on replacing Damien Cantrell with a reliable source revealing that a member of the team's coaching staff is set to fly to the United States to find another import.

"The locals have to play good for him (Cantrell) to play good. That's our problem with him," said a team source who requested anonymity.

"That has not been the case with the other teams, where the locals can play bad but the import could still give them a lift. That's the kind of import that we need," he added.

Roger Powell Jr., a former University of Illinois star, was mentioned as a possible replacement but team scouts said the 6-foot-6, 235-pound forward is still seeing action with the Rockford Lightning in the US CBA.



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ALCANTARA lifts his Asian Masters trophy.

Alcantara tops 14-under Asian Masters

FILIPINO FRANCIS CASEY ALCANTARA CAPTURED the boys' singles crown of the Asian 14-under Masters at the Melbourne Park in Australia as Philippine tennis started the new year on a high note last weekend.

Seeded only sixth in the tournament, the 13-year-old Alcantara dumped Sitaram Sudanwa of India, 6-2, 6-4, in the finals.

It was sweet revenge for the Cagayan de Oro native, who lost to the same Indian in the quarterfinals of the Asian 14-and-under championship in New Delhi, India, last November.

"I am very happy to win the Masters especially at the home of the Australian Open," said Alcantara. "Hopefully, I can continue to win in Sydney as well."

The Asian boys' and girls' teams, composed of the top 16 finishers in the tough Asian 14-and-under circuit, will play in the Australian 14 and Under Nationals

in Sydney starting on Wednesday. The tournament is both a team and individual event.

The team will return to Melbourne next week for the Ambassador's Cup.

On the way to the finals, Alcantara finished the round-robin stage with a 2-1 card, winning over Abdulnour Bruno of Syria, 6-2, 6-4, and Tito Hutaurok of Indonesia, 6-1, 6-2, before losing to Sudanwa, 1-6, 7-5, 2-6.

In the semifinals, Alcantara was on the court for only seven games as top seed Chumpetch Pattray of India retired due to an injury.

The retirement set up Alcantara for a winner-take-all match with Sudanwa whom the Filipino finally beat after three meetings.

The Asian team of 16 members is fully sponsored by the Australian Open under a joint development program with the Asian Tennis Federation.

Meanwhile, Fil-American Denise Dy opened her new season with aplomb last weekend when she qualified in three Australian Summer Junior Circuit tournaments, including the Australian Open Juniors Championship in Melbourne.

The tournament, a Grade A championship of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and a side event of the Australian Open, set Jan. 23 to 29, will cap her three-event stint in Australia.

The 15-year-old Dy, a member of the bronze medal-winning RP team in the last Southeast Asian Games, will start her Australian sojourn by competing in the Loy Yang Power Traralgon International, an ITF Grade 1 Tournament, in Victoria on Jan. 6 to 11.

This will be followed by another Grade 1 event, the Optus Nottinghill International on Jan. 15 to 21.

Dy is ranked No. 93 in the world by the ITF.

PSC plans free education for nat'l athletes, coaches

By Jasmine W. Payo

FREE EDUCATION FOR THE NATIONAL athletes and coaches will be the priority of the Philippine Sports Commission at the start of the year, PSC chair Butch Ramirez announced yesterday.

"Our immediate plan and one of the very big things for us this year is the launch of the Philippine Institute of Sports," said Ramirez.

"The first phase of the institute's program will be focused on short courses and lectures for the coaches and athletes," he added. "After that, during the second phase in 2007, we plan to offer two-year and four-year degree courses on sports sciences. We'll be offering scholarships to our athletes."

The Philippine Institute of Sports, located at the Philsports Complex in Pasig City, will be unveiled on Feb. 15.

The pioneering venture aims to restructure the national sports program through concrete projects such as talent identification, athletes' career education, coaches' education program and formal accreditation of coaches, among others.

"We had a survey that most of our athletes don't get to finish school," said Ramirez. "The coaches and athletes' general education will be the start, the catalyst. If we have bright coaches and bright programs, we'll have bright athletes."

Ramirez added that foreign educators from the Victorian Institute of Sports in Melbourne, Australia, will be tapped to lecture on sports medicine, management and administration.



MEMBERS of the national teams will soon put their hands together for an education plan to help them when they retire. AP

"This is all part of the Australian-Philippine sports linkages," he said. "We also have linkages with China and Russia."

During the institute's launch, Ramirez will also be meeting with nearly 300 regional sports heads and selected school athletic directors to discuss PSC's five-year sports master plan, the "RP Unified Sports Program."

"It's a collaborative effort among differ-

ent government agencies and we'll be discussing the schedule of our projects," said Ramirez.

The master plan, which Ramirez recently presented, tasked the Department of Education to work on the sports development and talent identification program at the grassroots level; the Commission on Higher Education on the training pool candidates from tertiary school competitions;

and the Department of Interior and Local Government on the identification of elite athletes from the Philippine national games.

PSC also recently identified its major targets in the next three years—five to 10 gold medals in the 2006 Asian Games; at least 75 golds in the 2007 Southeast Asian Games and the country's first gold in the 2008 Olympics.

championships in Bangkok, the Southeast Asian Taekwondo Union in Vietnam and the Korean Open.

The Philippines, he said, might skip the World Cup this year because of its new team competition format that put the country at a disadvantage due to its lack of heavyweight and middleweight bets.

"The Asian Games will be our focal point this year because we still have to win our first gold there," said Fernandez of the Asiad, whose caliber measures up to that of the Olympics because of the presence of superpowers South Korea, Iran and even China.

The best the country could achieve in the Asian Games were silver medals through Bobby Vargas and Jon Abraque. Monsour Del Rosario also won a bronze in the Asiad, according to Fernandez.

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2006

SPORTS

A19

Wade, Shaq lead Heat past listless T'wolves

MIAMI—DWYANE WADE SCORED 19 POINTS AND MIAMI USED a big third quarter to pull away to a 97-70 victory over Minnesota on Sunday night.

Shaquille O'Neal had 16 points for Miami, which allowed a season low in points, set a season high for margin of victory and held the Timberwolves to their lowest point total this season.

James Posey had 11 points for the Heat, who moved to a season-high six games over .500 (19-13).

Wally Szczerbiak scored 19 points and Kevin Garnett matched a season low with 11 for Minnesota, which has won two of its last 10 games but remains atop the Midwest Division.

Miami outscored Minnesota 25-6 in the opening 7:30 of the third quarter, turning a three-point halftime deficit into a 66-50 lead.

Wade had nine points in the run and O'Neal added six.

Cippers 100, Blazers 94

Portland, Oregon, Elton Brand had 20 points and 11 rebounds and the Clippers snapped a losing streak at the Rose Garden that dated to 1999.

The Clippers had lost 12 straight in Portland since an 89-83 win on April 11, 1999, and 26 of 29 since the start of the 1991-92 season.

After getting off to a 10-5 start this November, the Clippers went 6-7 in December, wrapping up the month with a

111-92 loss to Boston on Saturday.

Cuttino Mobley had 23 points for the Clippers and Sam Cassell added 22.

Jazz 98, Lakers 94

At Los Angeles, Andrei Kirilenko scored 23 points, Keith McLeod scored four of his 15 points in the final 78 seconds and Utah took full advantage of Kobe Bryant's suspension.

Bryant was suspended for two games without pay by the NBA after committing a flagrant foul against Mike Miller during last Wednesday's loss to Memphis.

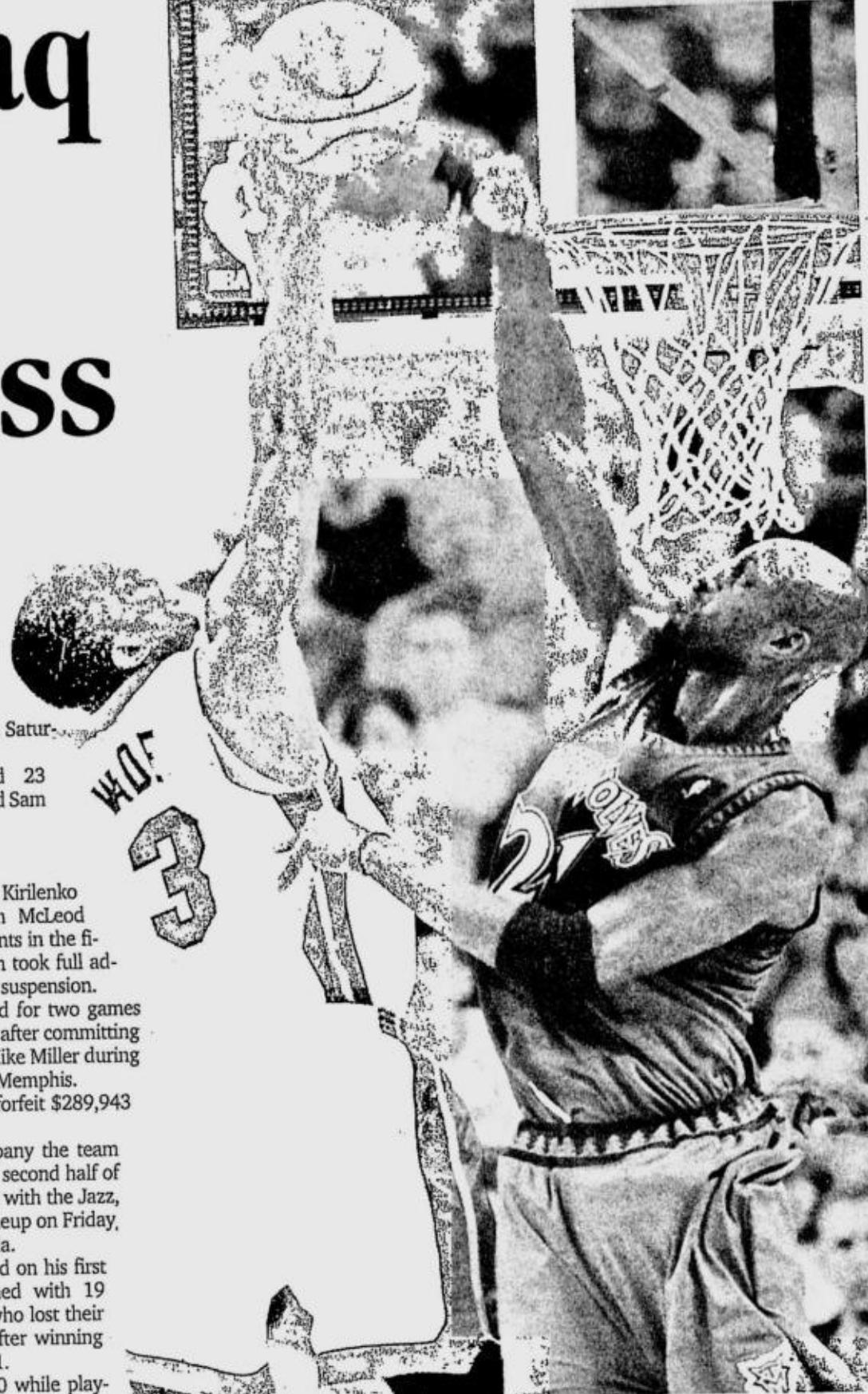
The Lakers' star will forfeit \$289,943 in salary.

Bryant won't accompany the team to Salt Lake City for the second half of the home-and-home set with the Jazz, but will return to the lineup on Friday night to face Philadelphia.

Brian Cook connected on his first eight shots and finished with 19 points for the Lakers, who lost their fourth straight game after winning nine of their previous 11.

The finished 8-for-10 while playing a season-high 40 minutes. AP

• Solar Sports will telecast the Seattle vs. Indiana game "live" at 8 a.m. today.



Aide to Viet coach sacked over SEAG soccer scam

HANOI—AN ASSISTANT TO VIETNAM'S NATIONAL football coach has been sacked by a top club after being accused of failing to stem alleged match-fixing during the recent South East Asian Games, an official said Monday.

The Danang club in the central city on Thursday terminated its contract with Le Thuy Hai, one of three assistants to Alfred Riedl of Austria, said club president Bui Xuan Hoa.

"Our decision takes effect immediately. His contract would have run until July 2006," Hoa said.

Hai has faced bitter attacks in state media as police began investigating allegations that some Vietnamese players had sought to arrange the scores during the Games in the Philippines in early December.

The scandal has already led to the arrest of four players of the Under 23 team and the resignation of Vietnam Football Federation vice president, Le The Tho.

Many other players and officials are being questioned over the accusations of attempts to fix some matches at the request of betting syndicates.

Hai was sacked for "not having carried out his responsibilities in management and education of players in the Danang club who took part in negative acts" during the games, said the popular daily Sports Vietnam.

"Mr. Hai has seriously hurt the reputation of Danang football club and of the city as a whole among fans and sponsors," it said.

Other state newspapers accused him of making "irresponsible and arrogant" statements about the match-fixing allegations when they first emerged.

Hai had only taken over as an assistant coach just before the SEA Games, after the sacking of Nguyen Thanh Vinh. Vinh was arrested in November over allegations of match-fixing in at least one match of the national professional V-League in April.

Vietnamese football has been under intense scrutiny for months, with police investigating fraud allegations implicating some 90 referees and coaches.

The scandal over the under-23 team is considered the worst crisis gripping the game in the football-mad communist nation since 1975. AFP



Seles also planning a comeback

SYDNEY—NINE-TIME GRAND SLAM WINNER Monica Seles is planning a comeback, buoyed by the success of players like Mary Pierce and Kim Clijsters who have returned to the top 10 after overcoming injuries.

Seles, 32, hasn't played since the 2003 French Open, held back by a broken bone in her right foot which still gives her trouble.

But after watching her friend Pierce make two Grand Slam finals last year, Seles believes she too can return and take on today's superstars.

"What Mary has achieved is nothing short of amazing. If she can come back from all her injuries and do so well, then I think why can't I?" she told the Australian Tennis magazine.

"After all, we're the same age and go back years and years." AFP

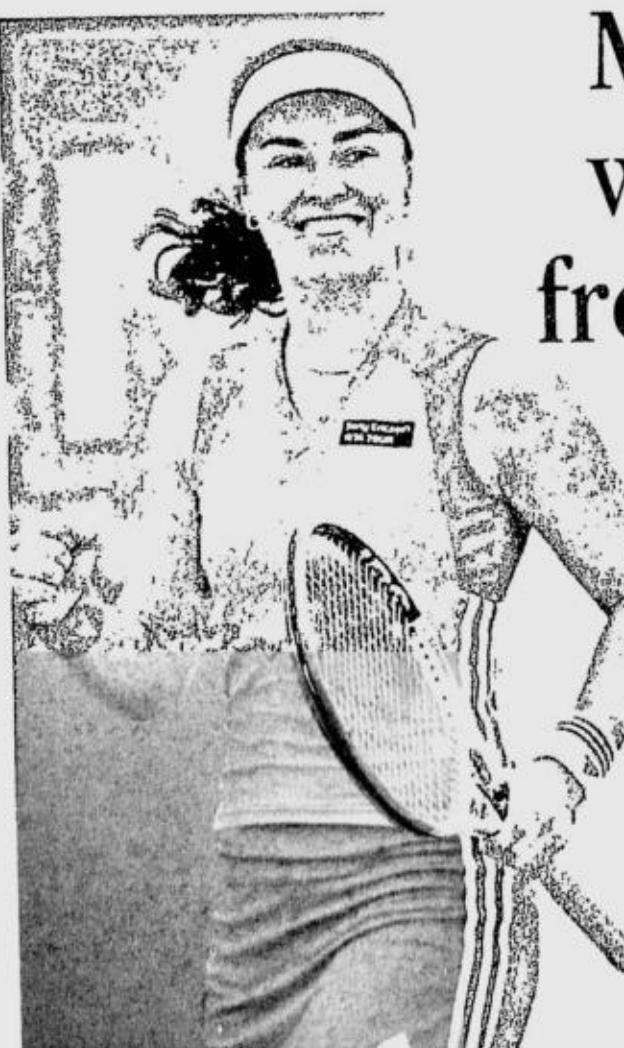
Hopman Cup: Dutch down Argentinians

PERTH, AUSTRALIA—PETER WESSELS BEAT former French Open champion Gaston Gaudio of Argentina 6-2, 7-6 (5) Monday to give the Netherlands a 2-0 winning lead in its Hopman Cup mixed teams tennis match.

Earlier, Michaela Krajicek gave the Netherlands, which had to qualify for the tournament by beating China last Friday, a 1-0 lead with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Gisela Dulko.

In mixed doubles, Dulko and Gaudio beat Krajicek and Wessels 4-6, 6-3, 10-5—the last set in a match tiebreaker—to make the final score 2-1 for the Netherlands.

Sweden played Serbia-Montenegro in a match later Monday. On Tuesday, Russia plays its first match against the United States, 1-0, while Australia, 0-1, plays the Netherlands.



FORMER world No. 1 Martina Hingis still plays to the gallery like no other on her return to active competition. AFP

Panthers nail playoff berth

PHILADELPHIA—JOE GIBBS AND THE WASHINGTON Redskins are back in the playoffs.

Clinton Portis ran for 112 yards and two touchdowns, leading the Redskins to a hard-fought 31-20 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday.

Washington (10-6) clinched the NFL's final playoff spot and its first postseason berth since 1999 with its fifth straight win. The victory also eliminated Dallas from contention.

The Redskins play Tampa Bay (11-5) in an

Martina makes winning return from retirement

GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA—MARTINA HINGIS MADE a successful return to competitive tennis Monday after a three-year absence, beating Maria Vento-Kabchi of Venezuela 6-2, 6-1 at the Australian women's hardcourt championships.

The 25-year-old Hingis, winner of five Grand Slam singles titles, made a nervous start when both players exchanged service breaks. But the former world No. 1 from Switzerland, showing no signs of an extended layoff due to chronic foot injuries, outplayed her opponent for the rest of the match.

Tournament spokesperson Eloise Tyson said Hingis appeared to be free from injury at the end of the match.

Hingis also plans to play in next week's Sydney International on a wild card and the Australian Open at Melbourne beginning Jan. 16, a tournament she has won three times.

It was Hingis' first tour match since a loss to Elena Dementieva in Filderstadt, Germany, in October 2002.

Hingis will take on seventh-seeded Klara Koukalova of the Czech Republic in the second round.

"I was a little nervous," Hingis told the sold-out Royal Pines stadium after the match.

"I'd like to thank my family and friends for supporting me." AP

Pele punched schoolmate who gave him his nickname

BERLIN—PELE ALWAYS SAID HE WAS unhappy with his name. Now he says he slugged the schoolmate who gave him it.

The former Brazil great was born Edson Arantes do Nascimento, but became better known by his nickname. Pele said Sunday he hated it so much he flipped out, earning a two-day school suspension.

"I didn't want that name. In Portuguese, Pele sounds like baby talk," Pele said. "Edson, in contrast, sounds like Edison, the inventor of the light bulb. But a schoolmate wanted to make me angry by calling me 'Pele.' First I glared at him, then I hit him."

Pele said he now feels grateful to the schoolmate for the nickname.

"The good thing is that people can easily say Pele all over the world. With Edson, the Asians would have problems," he said.

"Over the years, I've learned to live with two persons in my heart. One is Edson, who has fun with his friends and family; the other is the football player Pele."

Pele, now aged 65, is regarded as the greatest ever player. He won the World Cup with Brazil in 1958, 1962 and 1970. AP



PANTHERS' Steve Smith (89) reaches for the end zone after making a catch as Falcons' Ronnie Heard defends in Atlanta, Sunday. AP

ENTERTAINMENT

Mega wows

Dubai

Exclusive photos for INQUIRER Entertainment by Buddy de la Cruz and Mickey Munoz

IT WAS MEGASTAR SHARON Cuneta's first visit to Dubai—the first time in the Middle East—in fact—for a pre-Christmas performance at the 7,000-seater Dubai Aviation Club Stadium.

It was also the last stop in her 2005 concert tour that had taken her to Jacksonville in Florida, Chicago, Atlantic City, Reno, San Diego, Los Angeles, Hawaii and Guam.

Before embarking on the tour, Cuneta told INQUIRER Entertainment: "I heard great things about Dubai, Kuwait and the Middle East from my daughter KC's classmates and, of course, I loved the movie 'Dubai'."

The Overseas Filipino Workers in the region were, needless to say, excited. According to the producers from ABS-CBN Middle East, TFC World Tours and Artist House: "Ticket sales were brisk and started moving as early as three months before the show date, with Pinoy ticket-buyers coming from as far away as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)."

Special guest was "Star in a Million" champ Erik Santos, a self-confessed Sharonian.

Also present were Mega's loved ones—mom Elaine Cuneta, husband Sen. Francis Pangilinan

ian, babies Frankie and Miel, and eldest daughter KC Concepcion, who flew in from Paris to catch the show and do some serious shopping.

During the concert, the crowd's insistent requests for a song from KC resulted in mother and daughter doing a duet of "Ikaw."

Sharon has other dream destinations for the next tour. "I'd like to hold concerts in Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, France or Italy in Europe—actually, anywhere there's a Filipino."



SHARON Cuneta onstage. Inset, KC and Kiko with a kiss for Mega.

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Stars talk about their biggest blessings in 2005 and goals for 2006

CHRISTOPHER DE LEON DENNIS TRILLO BOOTS ANSON-ROA EDDIE GARCIA

JENNYLYN MERCADO MARK HERRAS PAULEEN LUNA

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AS WE WELCOME THE NEW YEAR, WE ASK some celebrities about the best things that 2005 brought their way and what their No. 1 goal is for 2006.

May the Year of the Dog give everyone more blessings to bark about and less pains that bite the heart. Just as a dog is man's best friend, may each day of 2006 befriend you in all the ways that count.

Bonne Annee tout le monde!!

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal



Mark Herras

The best thing about last year was that my first album turned gold and, also, I was able to buy a house. My priority this 2006 is to open a business, an internet cafe.

Polo Ravales

2005 was a remarkable year for me 'cause I made my show biz comeback. My main goal this year is to do a film with me playing the lead role na pang-award.

Duncan Ramos

Realizing deep facts about life and music helped me take a big leap in 2005. In 2006, South Border will be in the US from March onwards. I hope this turns out well for the band.

Mike Tan

Winning "Starstruck" was the highlight of 2005 for me. This year, I'll focus on improving myself in all aspects.

Melanie Marquez

My show on QTV 11, "Ginang Fashionista" was 2005's best gift for me. This year, my main goal is to buy a house and lot in Forbes Park. Ang dream big dapat, 'di ba?"

(E-mail: wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com)

wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com

Lorna Tolentino

One of the best things I discovered in 2005 was the right workout routine and diet—through my trainer, Rica Velasco. In 2006, I plan to do my share in uplifting the entertainment industry.

Bong Revilla

The biggest blessing I got in 2005 was the birth of my first apo, Jose Gabriel. I don't mind being a *lolo* at all. *Umuusok pa naman ako*. Ha-ha-ha. I intend to help more people through public service, and help revive the local movie industry this year.

Carmina Villaroel

So many good things happened to me this past year. One is the TV commercial that I did with my kids. It's a first for my twins. Also, Zoren and I were able to build our dream house. It's the product of our blood, sweat and tears. I can't ask for anything this year—maybe just more "rackets" for Zoren and me.

POSO GLORIA ROMERO YASMIEN KURDI RAINIER CASTILLO MARCO ALCARAZ
BIBOY RAMIREZ JENINE DESIDERIO and MS. AI AI DELAS ALAS

AQUARIUM OGIE ALCASID REGGIE CURLEY PAUL SALAS
WILMA DOESNT and ARA MINA

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Ako Legal Wife

Mano Po 4?!

Rufa Mae Quinto Cherry Pie Picache Jay and ZsaZsa Padilla
John Prats JC de Vera Bianca King Ella Guevara Julianne Lee

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KING KONG 5
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Six for the Metro Filmfest

AS OF THIS WRITING, WE'VE VIEWED SIX OF the 10 movies currently showing in the 2005 Metro Manila Film Festival.

We're glad we were able to watch "Exodus," because it features, not just imaginative visual effects, but some beautiful images that go beyond technology. The noteworthy production's weakest suit is its thin storytelling.

The images in "Mulawin 2" are also compelling, so the fantasy-adventure production is similarly viewable. Its weakest elements are its repetitive fight scenes and wooden performances that are upstaged by the striking visuals.

"Blue Moon," the filmfest's only drama, tells the unique story of three generations of men (Eddie Garcia, Christopher de Leon and Dennis Trillo) who are searching for love in its different forms.

The movie features felt performances by the male leads and Boots Anson-Roa, but tackles too many themes, and comes off as occasionally manipulative. Still, a should-see movie.

"Ako Legal Wife" is funny and has an eventful script. But polygamist Jay Manalo hardly ages, Zsa Zsa Padilla is entertaining but miscast, and Rufa Mae Quinto is roundly upstaged by Cherry Pie Picache. Despite its flaws, however, we're glad we viewed this production.

Wish we could say the same for "Kutob," but the psycho thriller, while visually compelling, is compromised by its protagonist being so obviously warped much too early in the story.

Thus, we wonder why the people he meets don't give him a wide berth and allow him to make them his victims. They come off as pretty silly as a result, and the film isn't scary—a no-no for a so-called thriller like this.

That's also the problem with "Shake, Rattle & Roll 2K5." The first story is bogged down by strident attempts at comedy, while the second is compromised by chunky storytelling and a stunning lack of initiative on the victims' part (get the heck out of that vile condo unit, you!).

The best episode is the third story, with its strikingly bucolic and atmospheric visuals, but its awfully tale is poorly developed and realized.

Perhaps it's time to give the "SRR" film franchise a long rest, so it can reenergize itself? Its latest reincarnation is a peevish, phlegmatic ghost of its earlier selves.

All told, therefore, the 2005 Filmfest's biggest come-ons are its well-visualized fantasy productions, which as expected have topped the box office, powering the festival to its most financially successful year yet.

But it's gratifying to see relatively "smaller" productions like "Blue Moon" and "Ako Legal Wife" providing alternative viewing options, not just in terms of format, but also (in the case of "Blue Moon") thematic significance.

Wish we could have more of that in future festivals, so after the initial popcorn surge of visual excitement shall have ebbed, something of substance would remain.

'Jane Doe' adventures on Hallmark

HALLMARK Channel welcomes 2006 with some Jane Doe adventure. In the debut episode on Jan. 1 at 9 p.m., "Jane Doe: Vanishing Act," Cathy Davis (Lea Thompson) assumes her secret identity as government agent Jane Doe, and solves the mystery of the missing computer file that holds the secrets of the USA's defense system.

On Jan. 8 at 9 p.m., "Jane Doe: Now You See It, Now You Don't" has Cathy catching the thief who stole the Declaration of Independence. But, when her main suspect is murdered, she realizes she's up against a cunning master.

And, at 9 p.m. on Jan. 15, "Jane Doe: Till Death Do Us Part" zeroes in on an arms dealer who dies while serving a life sentence. When his body disappears, Jane Doe is asked to investigate.

'Light a Million Mornings'

A BENEFIT concert, "Light a Million Morning," will be held at the CCP on Jan. 6 and 7, 2006, showcasing the Loboc Children's Choir and Pundakut Virtuous.

Also performing are violinist Alfonso "Coke" Bolipata and Julian Quirit, conductor of the Australian Pops Orchestra, together with his daughter Eliza, who also plays solo violin.

The concert will be directed by Leo Rialp, with Danny Favis as musical arranger. It will benefit 650 children at the Tuloy sa Don Bosco Streetchildren Village.

Second album

RACHELLE Ann Go has come out with her second album, "I Care," the collaborative effort of songwriters, arrangers and producers from Germany, Italy, the United States and the Philippines. The first single release from the new album is "If You Walk Away."



RACHELLE Ann Go

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre



"BLUE Moon": Good viewing option

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City Tel. No: 8981440-41

MORNING GIRLS R13 Please call for screening schedule	MULAWIN GP 12:20, 2:50, 5:30, 7:50, 10:15	AKO LEGAL WIFE: MANO PO 4 PG13 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
ENTENG KABISOTE: THE LEGEND CONTINUES GP 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	BLUE MOON GP Please call for screening schedule	EXODUS: TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440-41

SHANG CINEPLEX

ENTENG KABISOTE 2 MTRCB GP 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00	AKO LEGAL WIFE MTRCB PG-13 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
MULAWIN THE MOVIE MTRCB GP 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	EXODUS MTRCB GP 11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40

PREMIERE THEATRE (CLOSED)

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1 MOURNING GIRLS R13	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2 GP
3 MULAWIN GP	4 AKO LEGAL WIFE PG13
5 BLUE MOON GP	

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS

NOW SHOWING

1 MULAWIN GP	2 AKO LEGAL WIFE PG13
3 BLUE MOON GP	

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February 3 & 4
9PM
9PM

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EXODUS 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA BLUE MOON
SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	AKO, LEGAL WIFE 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
MULAWIN 11:30 / 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	BLUE MOON
ENTENG KABISOTE 2 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	MOURNING GIRLS
KUTOB 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

ALI MALL CINEMAS

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2 11:45 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25	4 MOURNING GIRLS 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00
2 MULAWIN 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05	5 AKO LEGAL WIFE 11:20 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
3 BLUE MOON 12:15 / 4:10 / 1:30 / 3:45 / 6:00	DOLBY DIGITAL SDDS

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Find out the man there four girls who have in common.

AKO LEGAL WIFE
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Enteng Kabisote*
Re-enter the magical world of Entengkabisa with Enteng and his family.

Exodus*
One man is destined to save mankind from the dark forces that are threatening it.

Mulawin The Movie*
The superhero we all admired on TV is now on the big screen.

Shake Rattle & Roll 2K5
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Kutob*
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*Movie is now showing.

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EXODUS

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AKO LEGAL WIFE
ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
MOURNING GIRLS

BLUE MOON
MULAWIN THE MOVIE

EXODUS

SM CITY MANILA SM CITY SOUTH MALL

BLUE MOON
MOURNING GIRLS

ENTENG KABISOTE 2
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5

MULAWIN THE MOVIE
BLUE MOON

EXODUS

SM CITY BICUTAN SM CITY BICUTAN

BLUE MOON
MOURNING GIRLS

ENTENG KABISOTE 2
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5

MULAWIN THE MOVIE
BLUE MOON

EXODUS

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ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MULAWIN THE MOVIE

EXODUS

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT

BLUE MOON
ENTENG KABISOTE 2

EXODUS

SM CITY PAMPANGA

MULAWIN THE MOVIE
LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

EXODUS

SM CITY BAGUIO

BLUE MOON
AKO LEGAL WIFE

MULAWIN THE MOVIE
ENTENG KABISOTE 2

EXODUS

SM CITY MARILAO

ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MULAWIN THE MOVIE

EXODUS

SM CITY DASMAINAS

EXODUS
KING KONG

BLUE MOON
ENTENG KABISOTE 2

EXODUS

SM CITY LUCENA

ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MULAWIN THE MOVIE

EXODUS

SM CITY BATANGAS

KING KONG
EXODUS

ENTENG KABISOTE 2
BLUE MOON

EXODUS

SM CITY DAVAO

EXODUS
KING KONG

AKO LEGAL WIFE
MULAWIN THE MOVIE

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GALLERIA

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE • THX 6 MULAWIN

12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

2 EXODUS 7 TERRORIST HUNTER

10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 ENTENG KABISOTE 8 EXODUS

12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00 12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30

4 KUTOB 9 ENTENG KABISOTE

12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00 10:15 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00

5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 10 MULAWIN

10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

2 ENTENG KABISOTE 5 KUTOB

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3 MULAWIN 6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL

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4 TERRORIST HUNTER 7 EXODUS

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METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 5 AKO LEGAL WIFE

10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05 10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

2 EXODUS 6 TERRORIST HUNTER

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3 ENTENG KABISOTE 7 KUTOB

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4 MULAWIN 8 EXODUS

11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00 11:25 1:45 4:05 6:25 8:45

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 EXODUS 5 MULAWIN

2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 6 ENTENG KABISOTE

3 KUTOB 7 AKO LEGAL WIFE

4 TERRORIST HUNTER 8 ENTENG KABISOTE

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3 RESERVE 3 EXODUS

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3 KUTOB 3 MULAWIN

4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 4 MULAWIN

5 EXODUS

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4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4 AKO LEGAL WIFE

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TUESDAY,
JANUARY 3, 2006

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BI

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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma



91-day T-bill rate falls to 40-month low

Cash-rich banks swamp gov't auction

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Richest Filipinos in 2005

Forbes world's billionaires list



Lucio Tan
Tobacco tycoon
Rank: 387
Worth \$1.7 billion



Henry Sy
Mall magnate
Rank: 368
Worth \$1.9 billion

Sources: Forbes.com

TWO FILIPINOS have been in Forbes magazine's world billionaire list for the past five years—Henry Sy of SM and Lucio Tan of Fortune Tobacco and Philippine Airlines. While Sy moved up from spot No. 406 in 2004 to No. 355, Tan went down from 377th place to No. 387. Jaime Zobel de Ayala of the Ayala Group of Companies also made it in 2005 at No. 437.

Jaime Alarcon, PDI Research

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY BILL RATES FELL ACROSS ALL MATURITIES, WITH the yield of the 91-day securities dropping to a 40-month low, during the government's first auction for 2006 yesterday.

The Bureau of Treasury said the auction results were due to optimism about the government's fiscal performance this year and the lingering high level of liquidity among banks coupled with the reduced volume of debt offering by the government for 2006.

The rate for the 91-day bill, used as a benchmark by banks in pricing loans, breached the 5-percent level to hit 4.961 percent. This was the lowest since Aug. 5, 2002.

"The decline in the rates was steeper than what the market expected. It was due to the liquidity overhang from last year and the government's more comfortable cash position (which allowed it to trim down its borrowings)," National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters in a briefing after the auction.

The 182-day bills fetched a rate of 6.807 percent, 39.9 basis points lower than the last rate recorded for 2005. The rate for the 364-day paper hit 7.611 percent, 35.8 basis points lower than the previous level.

The banks, still awash with cash, scrambled for the virtually risk-free government securities.

The six-month debt instrument was more than nine times over-subscribed, with tenders reaching P9.1 billion compared with the debt offering of only P1 billion.

The one-year government bills were over-subscribed by more than six times, as tenders stood at P9.59 billion compared with the debt offering of only P1.5 billion.

Bids for the 91-day bill reached P2.86 billion, or more than twice higher than the P1 billion on offer.

The P3.5-billion weekly treasury bill offering in the first quarter of this year was a reduction from the P4.5 billion in the fourth quarter of 2005. Cruz said the government could afford to borrow less because of the further improvement in the government's fiscal standing this year coming from an over-performance in 2005.

Cruz said preliminary estimates showed that the national government would incur a budget deficit for the whole of 2005 that would be lower than P160 billion, or the low-end of the initial expectations by fiscal authorities. The Department of Finance earlier said the 2005 deficit could hit anywhere between P160 billion and P165 billion, better than the official target of P180 billion and lower than the P184.6-billion deficit in 2004.

"The market has an intuitive sense of how we ended 2005 on a fiscal basis," Cruz said. He noted that the projected 2005 deficit of below P160 billion did not factor in the non-cash revenue collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, the government's biggest revenue earners.

Customs says it exceeded 2005 goal by P2B

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS, WHICH had been struggling to hit its revenue target until the last few months of 2005, announced yesterday that it surpassed its P151.2-billion collection goal.

The BOC's efforts were boosted by a last-minute decision by authorities to

include non-cash duty payments in the computation of the agency's revenue collection.

Citing preliminary figures, Deputy Commissioner and former Customs officer-in-charge Alexander Arevalo said the BOC exceeded its 2005 target by about P2 billion.

Arevalo, during yesterday's turnover ceremony to new Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales, attributed the bureau's attainment of its revenue goal to strengthened collection efforts by various port districts.

But the BOC admitted that non-cash duty collections accounted for at least

P12 billion of the total revenues last year. For the 11 months to November last year, the BOC was still facing an P8.3-billion revenue shortfall compared to its 11-month target.

Customs Deputy Commissioner Galant Soriano, in charge of the revenue

CUSTOMS/B2

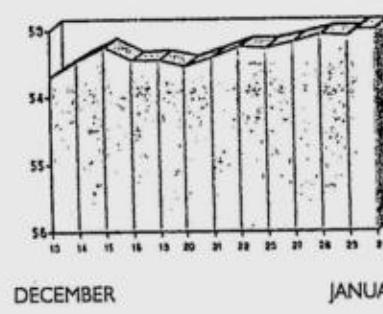
WHAT'S INSIDE

Our fabulous vacation in Thailand



/B2

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE
P 52.883 = \$ 1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 2, 2006
P 117.48 = \$ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 30, 2005
GOLD: \$514.00-514.50
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 30, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.19% lower

SHARE PRICES
closed 0.19 percent lower yesterday, the first trading day of the year, as investors locked in profits made last week, dealers said.

They said the pullback was expected due to a lack of strong positive leads and PLDT's losses last Friday in New York.

The composite index fell 4.04 points to 2,092 after trading between 2,085.45 and 2,096.04. Volume was a thin 448.5 million shares worth P343.2 million.

Declines led gains 24 to 19, with 47 stocks unchanged.

"Investors were a bit disappointed after the market closed 2005 at below 2,100 points despite year-end window-dressing," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

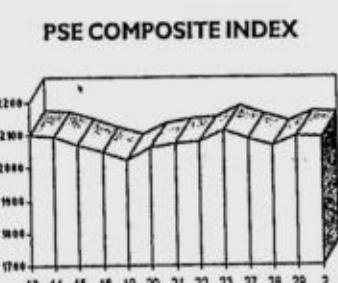
"The thin volumes also indicate that most investors are still on vacation or on the sidelines waiting for leads," he added.

Philippine financial markets were closed last Friday for a public holiday.

PLDT, the most actively traded stock, fell P15 to P1,820 after losses in its New York-listed shares.

Bank of the Philippines Islands was down 50 centavos at P54 but mall operator SM Prime Holdings advanced 20 centavos to P8.10.

San Miguel "A" shares were steady at P65 while its "B" shares rose 50 centavos to P89.



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Dutch firm raises stake in Alaska

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

DUTCH DAIRY CO-OPERATIVE Campina B.V. has beefed up its stake in milk products manufacturer Alaska Milk Corp. to 7.9 percent.

Campina chief executive officer Justinus Sanders reported to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that Campina has already acquired 71 million shares of Alaska, or 7.9 percent of the local firm's outstanding capital stock, as of Dec. 21, or up from an initial holdings equivalent to 3 percent.

Campina B.V. bought a total of 42.18 million shares of Alaska at P3.50 to P4 a share between October and December.

One of the deals, which involved the biggest tranche of 38.7 million shares last Dec. 21, was brokered by UBS Securities Philippines.

Sources said Campina, a long-time shareholder of Alaska, earlier expressed its interest in increasing its stake in Alaska. It could not yet be determined whether Campina's 7.9-percent interest in the milk company was enough for one board seat.

Alaska was incorporated in 1994 and began its operations in 1972 through Holland Milk Products Inc., a partnership between Holland Canned Milk BV and General Milling Corp. The company was listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange in January 1995.

SMC's Aussie subsidiary posts revenue hike

BERRI LTD., SAN MIGUEL Corp.'s wholly owned juice subsidiary in Australia, reported its revenues rose 3 percent to A\$371.9 million from January to September last year over the same period in 2004.

The company also reported an operating income of A\$20.3 million for the nine-month period, San Miguel said in a disclosure yesterday to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

San Miguel had said it had fully acquired through its wholly owned subsidiary, National Foods Holdings Ltd., the remaining 49-percent stake in Berri for approximately A\$169 million.

Berri is Australia's leading juice manufacturer. Its brands include Berri, Daily Juice, Australian Fresh, Just Juice and Juice It Up. Apart from juices, Berri al-

so produces bottled water.

Berri initially bought half of Berri in August 2004, then acquired another 1 percent several months later to give it control and enable the integration of its operations with Australian dairy firm National Foods earlier this year.

Berri churns out roughly A\$600 million in annual revenues. The company's extensive export trade spans 20 countries, mainly in Asia and the Middle East.

Berri's integration into National Foods is seen to double National Foods' exports to the Asia-Pacific over the next two years.

Some A\$55 million of National Foods' and Berri's combined revenue currently come from key export markets like Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez



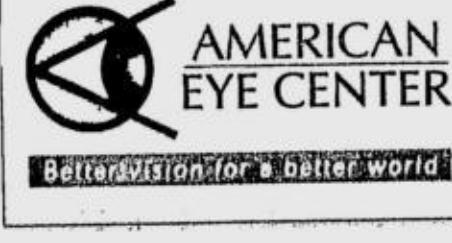
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*held in Orlando, Florida U.S.A. on Dec. 4, 2005.

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87% of BOI-registered projects implemented, says trade exec

Investment commitments hit P151B as of Nov.

By Ronnel W. Doming

REALIZED INVESTMENTS AMONG projects listed with the Board of Investments averaged at 87 percent in the past 11 years, according to Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez.

But Hernandez, who is also BOI Managing Head, said the figure was preliminary considering that the agency was still considering a report on the subject.

In a separate interview, Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said he wanted to change the Department of Trade and Industry's track on reporting investment figures to realized projects as opposed to committed outlay.

"Concerned agencies have been directed to prepare for this," Favila said.

Also, Hernandez said projects committed to the BOI was expected to have reached P151 billion in the 11 months ending November although it was not yet clear whether the DTI's target of P230 billion in investments for 2005 would be attained.

Early last year, the DTI said investments for 2004 went up 271 percent to a total of P210.7 billion against the P56.7 billion posted in 2003.

Hernandez said the 2005 target for investments was set at P200 billion, which was "on the low side" considering that foreign investors' mining projects were expected to start flowing last year.

He also said the P200-billion target was almost guaranteed since the government already had leads for at least P100 billion in investments in non-mining projects alone.

Then Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos said the government had received investment leads worth about P160 billion.

The possible ventures were mostly in mining, processed food and marine products, infrastructure, motor vehicles and parts, electronics, health and wellness, information technology and IT-enabled services, shipping and ship building sectors.

Under the government's medium-term investment priorities plan, promotional efforts are concentrated on the 11 sectors mentioned.



Traders track share prices at the gallery of the Philippine Stock Exchange. Share prices closed 0.19 percent lower on the first trading day of the year as investors took profits from last week's gains.

New classification scheme OKd

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE HAS started implementing a new industry classification scheme for listed companies in line with efforts to elevate its operations to world-class standards.

The new industry classification system categorizes a listed company according to where it gets the bulk of its revenues.

Under the old system, a listed company was classified according to its primary purpose as stated in its incorporation papers.

"The move will align the PSE stock grouping with classification standards being followed by other leading stock exchanges all over the world," PSE president Francis Lim said in a statement.

"With the new system, investors, especially the foreigners, can more easily target particu-

lar industries they want to watch without much adjustment in their templates because the new classifications are attuned to global standards," Lim said.

The new industry classification identifies an industry category of a listed company based on a Philippine Standard Industry Classification.

The new classification includes two new groupings, dubbed holding firms and service sectors, while retaining the financial, property and the combined mining and oil sectors.

It also simplifies the tag for the old "commercial-industrial" (C-I) sector by renaming it simply the industrial sector.

Many firms affected by the regrouping, which come from the old C-I sector, now make up the bulk of the new service sector.

Our fabulous vacation in Thailand

AFTER MY TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE TWO years ago, when we went for an incredibly cheap holiday to Hong Kong, I resolved to book a first class hotel through Thai Airways. For readers not aware of my previous disaster, I will briefly recap our adventures. We booked a 5-day/4-night trip to Hong Kong for only \$75 each. Of course, I did not expect to ride in the Airbus or a jumbo, and I was prepared for an old propeller aircraft. Instead of being driven to Naia, we were taken to Luneta where we boarded an air balloon, together

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

with many other people, a few goats and a carabao. There were no seat belts so we used scotch tape.

Halfway across, the stewardess informed us they were flying non-stop to Beijing, but we would be passing over Hong Kong airport, where we would have to jump from 2000 feet. She offered us parachutes at \$100 each as optional extras. We jumped, let rip and landed safely on our bottoms, but my small daughter was a little behind. Anyway, we survived the ordeal, and this time around, things were very different.

We rode in the new wide-bodied Airbus. In fact, it is so wide that I was standing on the aisle with nobody in the way, and it took me 10 minutes to reach the window seat. The flight was uneventful, except that my wife was offered a job as a stewardess. When we alighted in Bangkok, I was astonished to read a sign saying "Man who walk sideways through airport turnstile is going to Bangkok." (If you don't get this the first time, read it again until you do).

As usual, my wife embarrassed me at immigration. Last year, when filling up the form marked SEX, M or F, she wrote W. The immigration officer asked, "Does that mean woman?" "No," she said, "It means Monday, Wednesday, Friday. This year, she wrote infrequently and the officer asked, "Is that one word or two?"

Anyway, we were picked up in a Mercedes, and taken 150 km to Pattaya in just two hours. The driver told me that although it is an excellent car, if it hits a tree, the Mercedes bends. I asked the management to give us a room near the elevator so I wouldn't have to walk far. They did better. They gave us a suite where the elevator ran through the center of the bedroom. Every time I walked naked out of the bathroom, a group of people would whistle. When I complained, they took away the bath.

In the hotel was a Chinese restaurant. It was so high class that the menu was written in French. And the security was fantastic. Room service and laundry were unlisted. The hotel

was so big that whenever you dialed reception, you got charged long distance. Because of the tsunami a year ago, business was bad. In fact, it was so bad that the hotel started stealing towels from the guests. I tried to learn Thai because there are fewer words, but I found it difficult because none of them are English.

I could not change my pesos for baht. Nobody knew the rate, including the money-changers and the banks. They now have ATM machines with a notice: "Money speaks all languages, a fact you can determine. But nowadays, it only speaks in Japanese and German."

Pattaya is famous for its water sports. There is scuba diving, water mops for pedophiles, and best of all, para-sailing. These activities are too dangerous for a man of my age, so I stuck to surfing—until my Internet card ran out. One day, 20 pregnant refugees arrived ashore in a small dingy but the government could not do anything for them as they were all in the same boat.

Sometimes, staying in a first class hotel can be frustrating. I had to wear a coat and tie in the sauna. My daughter found it difficult to sleep, so I put her on the edge of the bed until she dropped off. It was so hot that the cows gave evaporated milk. In fact, it was so hot that I slept with the air conditioner under my pillow.

It's nice to be able to go abroad once a year. When I was young, we were so poor that my mother used to paint my feet black and lace up my toes. Now, I am in a hotel that is so expensive that my wife had to cosign for a ham sandwich. Yesterday, my wife went window-shopping and she bought five windows. I am not saying that my wife is a big spender, but Rustan's has opened a branch in our living room. It is funny how we got married. We were in the cinema and I said, "Do you like nuts?" She said, "If that's a proposal, I accept."

We had a fantastic New Year's Eve party. Huge quantities of food were arranged around the swimming pools. The waiter asked me if I like meatballs, and I told him that I had never been to one. My only problem is that I had insomnia. I told the doctor about it but he said, "Don't lose any sleep over it." I am writing this on the plane going back home. The pilot, Pontius, has just told us to fasten our seat belts so I have to belt up. Next week, it is back to the stock market. mrbearbull@hotmail.com



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Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,175,000	Please Call
Anvaya Cove Beach & Nature Club		
Baguio Country Club	550,000	500,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	20,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	70,000	
Camp John Hay	200,000	165,000
Cavite Country Club	550,000	490,000
Capitol Hills	70,000	45,000
Cebu Country Club		1,300,000
Cebu City Sports Club	120,000	
Club Phil	140,000	
Club Pilipino		
Eastwood City Sports Club "A" / "B" / "C"	Please Call	
Forest Hills "A"	140,000	100,000
Forest Hills "B"	Please Call	
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	
Marikina Sports Club "A"	200,000	185,000
Marikina Sports Club "B"	250,000	
Manila Golf (Corporate)	11,000,000	
Manila Golf (Individual)	2,200,000	2,100,000
Manila Polo	370,000	300,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	720,000	600,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	400,000	
Manila Yacht Club	120,000	90,000
Marinera (Corporate)	430,000	450,000
Mt. Makiling Gold "A"	230,000	200,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	150,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	280,000	
Orchard Golf Club "C"	430,000	
Orchard City Sports Club	170,000	130,000
Rockwell	Please Call	
Spa & Lodge	520,000	
Sia "A"	1,100,000	
Sia Elena "B"	1,600,000	
Tanayay Country Club	330,000	300,000
Tanayay Highlands	750,000	650,000
Tanayay Midlands	880,000	630,000
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TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2006

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 2, 2006)					
STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34	34	34	34	24,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	54.5	54.5	54	54	469,800
City Banking Corp.	620	620	620	620	120
Chitaya Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	58.5	58.5	57.5	57.5	77,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	32	32	701,200
Philippine National Bank	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	5,600
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	10,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	32	32	32	32	3,600
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTION					
First Abacus Financial	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	30,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3070	3070	3070	3070	120
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hedges Corp.	49.5	49	48.5	49	34,300
Manila Electric Co. A	14.25	14.5	14	14.25	15,300
Manila Electric Co. B	21.75	21.75	21.5	21.75	25,800
Manila Electric Co. Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.2	1,287,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	539,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	40,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24	24.5	24	24.25	16,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	40.5	40.5	40	40	291,000
Pancake House Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	50,000
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	370,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	65	64	65	9,800
San Miguel Corp. B	88.5	89	88.5	89	17,900
Universal Robina Corp.	19.5	19.5	19.25	19.25	22,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	150,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & RELATED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.33	

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2006

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PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE**INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS**

Offered for Sale are seven residential lots formerly belonging to the Peninsula Development Bank (Penbank), whereby six lots are located at Peninsula Homes, Subdivision, Barangay Bukal, Pagbilao, Quezon; and one lot is located at San Vicente, Gumaca, Quezon.

These seven residential lots are being offered on a per site and on an "as-is, where-is" basis, as follows:

Peninsula Homes Subdivision, Barangay Bukal, Pagbilao, Quezon

SITE NO.	TCT NO.	LOT NO.	AREA (sq.m.)	INDICATIVE PRICE
1	T-390084	Lot-8	120	54,000
2	T-390103	Lot-6, Blk. 6	230	150,000
3	T-390089	Lot-7, Blk. 6	204	133,000
4	T-390051	Lot-6	89	67,000
5	T-390061	Lot-12, Blk. 6	227	148,000
6	T-390078	Lot-1	117	47,000

*With informal dwellers

Offers will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of offerors on 17 January 2006, 6th Floor, PMO Conference Room, NDMC Building, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may request for the duly authenticated copies of the Offer for Sale documents for a nominal fee of P300.00 from the PMO Marketing Office, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

For more information, please call Mr. John DF. Baldemor of the PMO Marketing Department at 817-6331 or 817-8762.

(PDI--Jan. 3, 4 & 5, 2006)

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OBITUARIES

Your word is a lamp for my steps
and a light for my path.
- Ps. 119:105

CARLOS ROEPPER WILSON

entered into the light of life to join the
Lord of Light and his
wife LUCRECIA LOPEZ,
on the 31st of December 2005
at the age of 69.

His children, STELLA, RONA, MISEL,
JOSEPH; grandchildren KARL, JJ, MARJ,
DONITA, TOBY, PAOLO, JUSTIN,
JOAQUIN & DAVID; brother NORMAN and
sisters SR. MARY JAMES and GLORY, who
had accompanied him on this journey to light,
lovingly return him to his Creator.

The wake is at the Good Shepherd Convent
Chapel, 1043 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City.

Interment will be today, January 3, 2006
at the Loyola Park, Marikina City
after the 2:00 PM Mass.

FRANCISCO ALIKPALA GAA

Peacefully joined our Lord and his wife Lety
on January 1, 2006 at the age of 75.

His children Pinky, Bambi and Sonny,
Fr. James, Amiel and Rachelle;
grandchildren Mara, Samantha, Zoe and Zachary;
and great grandchild Giorgia request the pious readers
to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His ashes are at Sta. Rita Parish,
Philam Homes, Quezon City.

Burial mass will be on Wednesday,
January 4, 2006 at the Good Shepherd Cathedral,
Regalado Avenue, Fairview Park.

God has you in keeping; We have you in our hearts...

CYNTHIA ESTEVANEZ GARCIA-POBRE

Devoted and loving wife of Baldomero "Monet" Agdamag Pobre,
selfless and compassionate mother to her children and a trusted friend
to many, born January 31, 1953, peacefully joined her creator on
December 29, 2005 at the age of 52.

Her children Coy & Aji; Chi & Carol; Brix & Maja; Julius and
Jinggoy; grandchildren Attha, Ayiel, Keelo, Kaira and Charlie,
together with her brothers & sisters Ronnie, Andy, Sonny(†),
Dodo(†), Dick, Monching, Dianne, Jo, Pat Jr., Jimmy, Jeanna;
sisters and brothers-in-law; relatives and friends request the pious
readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Pobre's Residence in Bonifacio St.
Bagumbayan, Tuguegarao City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, Jan 4, 2006, 9:00 a.m. at Sanctuary
Of Peace, Tuguegarao Memorial Park, Tuguegarao City.

George Angelo G. Padolina

now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord.

He joined our Creator on 01 January 2006 at the age of 52.

He will be missed by his wife, Elizabeth; children George John and Joshua John;
mother, Angelina G. Padolina; brother and sister-in-law, William and Cristina;
parents-in-law, Ireneo and Virginia Raule; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Jojo
and Abel Raule, Gary and Shirli Raule, Ricky and Arlene Dominguez, Larry and
Nelia Lumanog; nieces, nephews, grand nephews and other relatives.

His body lies in state at the Faith Chapel, Don Bosco Memorial Chapels, Pasay Road,
Makati City.

Interment will be on Thursday, 05 January 2006 at the Manila Memorial Park,
Sucat Road, Parañaque after the 1:30 pm necrological service at the Faith Chapel.

"My soul, be at rest in God alone from
whom comes my hope." Psalm 62:6

DR. JOSE L. RODULFA, JR. DMD

April 18, 1937 – December 30, 2005

He will be missed by his loving wife
Josefina; children Jerome, Jonas, James,
Joshua, Joanne, Jericho Joseph, Jessica
& Jeremiah; sister Evangeline; in-laws,
grandchildren, cousins, relatives and
friends.

His body lies in state at the Loyola
Memorial Park Chapel 4, Marikina City.
Cremation will be on Thurs., January 5,
2006, 10 a.m. at Loyola Crematorium,
Marikina City.

Sister DOLORES (DIVINA) LEAL, ICM

died in the grace of our Lord on January 1, 2006 at the age of 70
on the 42nd year of her religious missionary life.

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
(ICM Sisters), her family, other relatives and friends request
the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

The Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on January 6, 8 a.m.
at the Queen of Peace Chapel, Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery.

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An obituary with a picture can be a
fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

- Copy of Death Certificate
- Any identification document (I.D.)

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Security Services for NFA-Region 10
Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on July 28, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, Region 10, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project: Contracts for the Supply of Security Services for NFA-Region 10
Location: Office and warehouse structures within the jurisdiction of NFA-Region 10 (Misamis Oriental/Cagayan de Oro City, Camiguin, Bukidnon and Lanao Norte)
Brief Description: Contract involves the supply of security services for CY 2006 to provinces under operational jurisdiction of NFA Region 10 - Northern Mindanao
Contract Duration: March 2006 - March 2007
Delivery Period: March 2006 - March 2007

CONTRACT NO.	PROVINCE	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GUARDS	MONTHLY RATE PER GUARD	APPROVED BUDGET CEILING
1.	Misamis Oriental/Cagayan de Oro City	26	P 11,308.29	P 3,528,186.48
2.	Bukidnon/Camiguin	33	P 10,932.23	P 4,329,163.08
3.	Lanao Norte	12	P 11,308.29	P 1,628,393.76

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding and complemented with key personnel and equipment (owned) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids, shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	ADDRESS	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	2F, NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	Dec. 28, 2005 to Jan. 6, 2006	8:00 AM 5:00 PM Working Days
2. Pre-Bid Conference	Conference Room, 2F NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	Jan. 19, 2006	1:30 PM
3. Deadline for Submission and Receipt of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents	Conference Room, 2F NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	Feb. 01, 2006	1:30 PM
4. Opening of Bids	Conference Room, 2F NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	Feb. 01, 2006	1:35 PM

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Five Thousand Pesos Only (P5,000.00) per contract** to the Cashier of National Food Authority-Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City.

The National Food Authority, Region 10 assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The National Food Authority, Region 10 reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the Bidders.

(Sgd.) CAMILO D. MAGTRAYO
BAC-Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 28, 2005 & Jan. 3, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE
APPLICATION FOR: (A)
AUTHORITY TO UNBUNDLE
RATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH
SECTION 36 OF REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 9136; AND (B) APPROVAL OF
THE AUTOMATIC FUEL COST
ADJUSTMENT (AFCA) WITH
PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL
AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2005-045 RC

CIP II POWER CORPORATION (CIPP)
Applicant.

X-----X

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing on October 21, 2005 by CIP II Power Corporation (CIPP) of an application for: (a) authority to unbundle rates in accordance with Section 36 of Republic Act No. 9136; and (b) approval of the Automatic Fuel Cost Adjustment (AFCA) with prayer for provisional authority.

The Commission has set the said application for hearing on January 19, 2006 at nine o'clock in the morning (9:00 A.M.) at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing, they be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR., Chairman, and the Honorable OLIVER B. BUTALID and RAUF A. TAN, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 11th day of November, 2005 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA
Executive Director III

(PDI - Dec. 27, 2005 & Jan. 3, 2006)

DOUGLAS J. ABBOTT, #53040
Attorney at Law
4966 El Camino Real, Suite 125
Los Altos, Ca 94022-1406
(650) 967-1001

Attorney for Petitioner
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF
SANTA CLARA

In the Matter of the) No. 105 A 019531
Adoption Petition of)
CITATION TO APPEAR AT)
HEARING
SAMSON D. AGBAYANI) (Family Code S8604b)
Adopting Parent,)
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
To LUISITO S. TABURADA:

YOU ARE CITED to appear at 9:00 a.m. on Feb. 10, 2006, in Department 60 of the above-entitled court, located at 115 Terrain Street, San Jose, California. At that time and place, you must show cause why the petition of SAMSON D. AGBAYANI to adopt your minor child, KACYS LUV F. TABURADA, should not be granted without your consent in the above-entitled proceeding, on the ground that for a period of one year after April, 2003, you wilfully failed to communicate with, and pay for the care, support and education of, the above child although you were able to do so. A copy of the petition is on file with the court.

YOU ARE FURTHER ADVISED that if you appear at the above hearing and wish to have legal counsel but are unable to afford counsel, the court will appoint counsel on your behalf.

Dated : Dec. 8, 2005 Clerk of the Superior Court

By : B. Forbes
Deputy Clerk

CITATION TO APPEAR AT HEARING
(PDI - Dec. 28 & 27, 2005 & Jan. 3 & 10, 2006)

Food Development Center holds seminar workshop

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY'S FOOD Development Center (FDC) will conduct a seminar workshop on "Understanding Sampling Plans and Uncertainty Measurements in a Food Microbiology Laboratory" on Jan. 19 to 20, at the Food Development Center Compound, FTI Complex, Taguig City. Two of the least understood concepts in Quality Assurance (QA) of laboratory testing involve sampling plan development and uncertainty measurement. The course is designed to assist participants in the areas of sampling plan development and uncertainty measurement. Laboratory managers, analysts, microbiologists, technical and quality control staff are enjoined to attend. The principal lecturer for the seminar workshop is Dr. Manuel M. Garcia, a former senior research scientist of the Animal Diseases Research Institute, Agriculture Canada and an internationally recognized microbiologist and food safety expert. The course fee is P5,000.00 per person. For further inquiries, contact Amelia S. Bautista, Food Development Center, National Food Authority, FTI Complex, Taguig City at tel. nos. 838-4014 to 16; 838-4601; 838-4478 and fax nos. 838-4016-17 and 838-4692.



Read it every Sunday
with the
Philippine Daily Inquirer.





*"He will swallow up death in victory,
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces."*
- Isaiah 25:8

Secretary Angelo T. Reyes,
officials and employees of the
Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG),
including the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM),
Philippine National Police (PNP),
Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC),
Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP),
Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP),
Local Government Academy (LGA),
Patrol 117 Commission
and Regional Offices

express their heartfelt condolences
and sympathy to the family of

ROBERT Z. BARBERS

DILG Secretary

(April 16, 1996 to February 3, 1998)

*Who peacefully joined his Creator
on 25 December 2005 at the age of 61.*

The DILG family joins the bereaved family, wife **Virginia**;
children: **Gov. Robert Lyndon**, **Rep. Robert Ace**,
PTA Gen. Mgr. Robert Dean and **Mary Grace**;
daughters-in-law **Tricia**, **Badette** and **Nana**;
son-in-law **Lauro Baja III**; grandchildren;
parents, **Ret. Judge Felix** and former **Vice Gov. Regina**;
siblings **Jojo**, **Alan**, **June**, **Doris** and **Hope**,
in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

Necrological services will be held today at 7:00 p.m.
at the PNP Multi-Purpose Center, Camp Crame, Quezon City.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."
- Philippians 1:21

BUSINESS

PDIC to unload EIB's bad assets worth P10B

Bank to get fresh infusion from Indonesia, HK investment firms

By Doris C. Dumla

THE PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE Corp. is set to unload the bad assets of Export Industry Bank worth P10 billion, which the bank inherited from the defunct Urban Bank group.

"With the disposal of these non-performing assets and the new capital of P3 billion, the bank will reflect a stronger balance sheet and a risk-based capital adequacy ratio well within the BSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)-prescribed ratio for commercial banks," EIB yesterday said in its disclosure.

The bank will get a fresh infusion from major stockholders led by the Lippo group of Indonesia and the lo-

cal Yao group.

Also, Extra Year Investments Ltd., the designated investment vehicle of the RZB group of Austria and AO Capital Partners Ltd. of Hong Kong, will be sinking in fresh capital.

The additional capital is intended to shore up the bank's capital base, and to comply with the new international accounting standards as well as the Philippine financial reporting requirements on the capital of banks now being implemented by the BSP.

The bad assets the PDIC would be taking out from the Export Bank were acquired from Urban Bank Inc. and Urbancorp Investments Inc.

EIB absorbed Urban Bank in 2002. "These transactions will signifi-

cantly reduce the EIB's [non-performing assets], thereby improving the bank's profitability," EIB said.

In an interview, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the Monetary Board had already approved the asset take-out during previous meetings.

The bank and its major stockholders who would infuse the additional capital of P3 billion signed a memorandum of agreement with the PDIC last Dec. 29.

The agreement covered the terms and conditions for the capital infusion, and the sale of the non-performing assets, acquired from Urban Bank, to PDIC.

EIB is also set to undertake a reval-

uation and reclassification of its common shares, the redefinition of the conversion features of the preferred shares and the restructuring of its capital stock by increasing its authorized capital stock to P7.5 billion to provide for the entry of additional equity investment.

EIB's new capital shall consist of P6 billion in common shares and P1.5 billion in preferred shares.

To implement the reorganization, a special stockholders meeting will be held on Jan. 25.

Also during the meeting, the stockholders will decide whether to implement the requisite amendments to the bank's charter, which will pave the way for the reorganization.

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1.0MM - 4.99MM	6.375	6.500	6.625
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Q1-Q3 garments exports up 4.6%

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE REMOVAL OF THE GLOBAL GARMENTS quota system resulted in a 4.6-percent growth in Philippine exports to \$2.13 billion in the 10 months ending October last year.

The Garments and Textiles Export Board reported that October exports grew 27 percent to \$207.7 million from \$162.65 million in the same month last year.

GTEB last week ceased operations as its main responsibility of managing quotas ended when the world's major importing countries scrapped the quota system starting Jan. 1, 2005.

The Board of Investments is now managing GTEB's other functions of developing the industry through the formulation of strategies, consultations with players, labor relations and investment promotion.

GTEB expects 2005 earnings to grow 8 percent considering the expected 25-percent revenue growth in November and December.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila, who is also BOI Chair, said the garments business was

now driven by free market forces, rather than limiting rules such as quotas.

"The removal of the quotas) opened new opportunities, especially in the European market and also in specialty product categories in the United States," Favila said. "These in turn, resulted in overall export growth."

Garments industry earnings accounted for about 6.3 percent of total exports in the 10 months to October, which hit \$33.76 billion.

The official said the industry's performance so far showed the "resilience and creativity of Filipino garments and textile business people working with a responsible labor force that adapts to the challenges of the new global business environment."

He added that with the government's improved integrated service approach and its partnership with the private sector, 2006 promises to be an even better year for the industry.

However, GTEB data showed that exports to the US from January to October reached about \$1.62 million or 1.8 percent lower than the previous period's \$1.48 billion.

Government all set to raise VAT to 12%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS already met the two requirements stated under the VAT Reform Law, allowing authorities to raise the value added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent this year, according to the Department of Finance.

Under the new VAT law, the government could raise the VAT rate by two percentage points if it met either of the two conditions: a VAT collection-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio of at least 2.9 percent, and a budget deficit-to-GDP ratio of at least 1.5 percent.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told reporters that, based on preliminary data, the two conditions had been met.

"Assuming that the deficit hits P160 billion and GDP is P5.3 trillion, then that already translates to a deficit-to-GDP ratio of 3 percent," Teves said.

Official figures on the VAT-to-GDP and deficit-to-GDP ratios will be available by the end of January.

Once the figures are in, the increase in the VAT rate may be implemented on Feb. 1 as scheduled, Teves said.

The VAT Reform Law aims to improve the national government's fiscal standing by generating additional revenues. The law basically expanded the coverage of the tax to include oil and electricity, among others, starting last Nov. 1. The law also provided for the increase in the VAT rate this year.

The DOF estimated that the tax measure, the centerpiece of the Arroyo administration's fiscal reform agenda, would generate P81.4 billion in additional revenues every year starting 2006.

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Brand-new you for the new year

START THE YEAR right with a regimen that will allow you to feel the benefits after only seven days.

The abuses and excesses of the year before are history now, so it's time to rewrite your wellness plan if you like to live better and longer.

Our bodies allow us to do what we have to do and go where we want to go, and they are with us up to the very end. They are not replaceable and cannot be traded in.

It's time to reward our bodies with healthy pampering by giving our internal systems a rest.

Did you know...

That remnants of the food you ate even as a child may still be inside you?

It is a fact known to experts in the field of holistic/alternative medicine that not all foods are easily digestible. Thus, they leave encrustation along the sides of the stomach. Continuous intake of high-fat foods may add to the problem, eventually creating a breeding ground for bacteria and infection.

Rate yourself

Need to find out where you are in the urgency check list? (Give yourself 3 points for A, 2 points

for B, 1 point for C.)

How do you rate your current diet?

- a) very healthy
- b) fairly healthy
- c) bad

How are your energy levels?

- a) good
- b) ok
- c) low

Which best describes your activity levels?

- a) regular exercise and/or active job/life
- b) some exercise but sedentary job
- c) no exercise and sedentary job

How much water do you drink per day?

- a) 8-10 glasses
- b) 3-4 glasses
- c) less than 3 glasses

How much canned drinks (cola, soda, etc.), tea, coffee do you drink per day?

- a) few/none
- b) 3
- c) 6 or more

How much alcohol do you drink per week (one unit=medium glass of wine, pint of beer, one measure of spirits)?

- a) 4-6 units
- b) 8-12 units
- c) 15 units or more

How much fruits/vegetables do you eat a day?INSIDE
OUTCory
Quirino

great motivation to you.

- Repeat to yourself this affirmation: "I love myself by doing this."

• Go to your refrigerator and start removing all the junk food. Replace with healthy food stuff. Exchange the cakes and sweets with fruit. Add beet roots, carrots, assorted greens (preferably romaine lettuce, sprouts, tomatoes, nuts, legumes/beans, lemons).

• Choose a hot spice (chili, cayenne, lemon grass, ginger) to make into tea.

• Make sure you have plenty of filtered water.

Beginner's program

• Drink a cup of warm water and one teaspoon of lemon juice first thing each morning (or one tablespoon of apple cider vinegar in a cup).

• Drink a glass of water every hour.

• Take a vegetable juice daily.

• Take only brown/red rice daily.

• Have a raw salad daily.

• Do not skip meals. Eat light but right.

• Supplements: multivitamins—take one after your heaviest meal.

• Add kelp to your diet, which provides the body with iodine



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

that regulates your metabolism.

• Minimize your dairy intake; replace cow's milk with items like goat's milk/cheese, soya milk, rice milk, sheep's milk/cheese.

• Eat more fish each day. Eliminate red meat and minimize pork intake.

• Do deep breathing for five minutes.

• Smile at yourself in the mirror every morning.

• Have 10 minutes of relax-

ation/meditation daily, morning and evening.

• Say three to five affirmations daily.

• Laugh with gusto once daily.

• Visualize a happy you each day.

Don't just begin with your right foot, make it your best.

Love and light!

(Reference: "Detox Yourself" by Jane Scrivner)

Fitness trends for 2006

IN 1997, THE WALL Street Journal dubbed the American Council on Exercise (ACE) as the "workout watchdog" for the fitness industry.

This nonprofit fitness advocacy foundation has sponsored many independent university-based studies on infomercial fitness products and popular workouts to give the public unbiased information on what really works.

ACE is also the largest organization that certifies fitness professionals all over the world. It conducts examinations twice a year here in the Philippines to keep Filipino instructors up to par with their peers abroad.

ACE makes yearly forecasts on the general direction that the fitness industry is going. Its forecast for 2006 is based on a survey of 50,000 certified fitness professionals worldwide.

Sport-specific

Competitive athletes have long learned the value of sport-specific training or fitness programs specifically designed for their sport. ACE says, "A sport-specific training program involves focusing on the specific skills associated with an activity (e.g. tennis play-

ers strengthening the rotator cuff muscles to improve their serve), while improving cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength, core stability, and flexibility."

It sees more and more kid and teenage athletes employing personal trainers to improve their game and prevent injuries.

Flexible personal training

A decade ago, personal training was only for the rich and famous. But fitness consumers realized that personal trainers could help them achieve their fitness goals more quickly and effectively.

Personal training, however, does not come cheap. That's why more flexible options were developed. Many fitness centers now offer small-group training for two to five individuals. This is a practical and economical way of getting quality fitness supervision.

Another trend is families working together under the professional guidance of a personal trainer either at home or in a fitness club.

Older adults

If you start seeing more senior citizens pumping iron or striking a yoga pose, you are observing a growing interest in "older adult fitness." ACE encourages seniors

WELL AND GOOD
Tina
Juan

to work out because a well-balanced fitness program can "condition muscles, tendons, ligaments and bone to help fight osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, keep the body more limber, stabilize the joints and lower the risk of everyday injury."

Personal training is particularly important for older adults who need special attention due to conditions like hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. For older individuals with orthopedic problems, a physical therapist with a fitness training background is a good choice.

Simple exercise habits

According to ACE, simple exercise habits like daily walks remain popular. This is no surprise since many people do not have the time for formal exercise sessions. ACE

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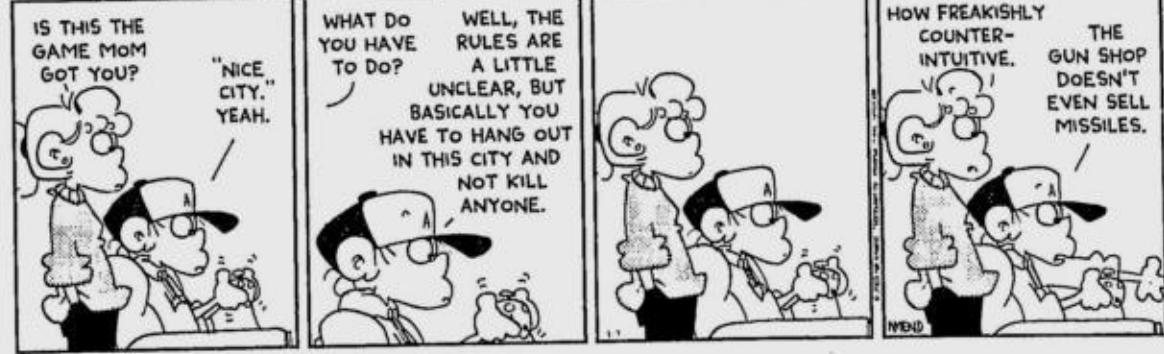


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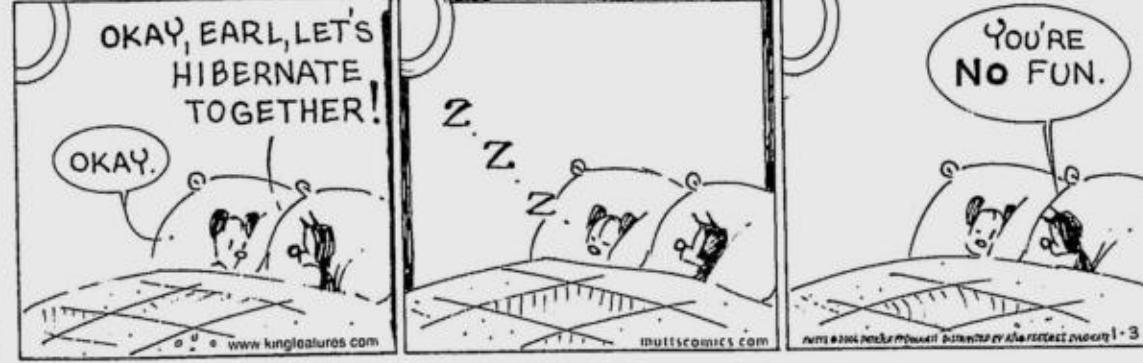
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ATOMO AND WEBOY



BY LYRA GARCIELLO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're not a quitter. Whatever you pursue, you give it 100 percent. This attitude of devotion will bring you great accomplishment. You have strong opinions and are highly persuasive. You're entertaining and charming (and sometimes known as a storyteller). You enjoy being active with groups. You will have to make an important choice this year. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Mel Gibson, actor; J.R.R. Tolkien, writer; Steven Stills, singer/songwriter.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Work behind the scenes as much as possible today. You'll feel better if you do. Privately, you feel a bit rebellious and very independent.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Something sudden and unusual might occur that briefly puts you in the limelight today. It will certainly call attention to you. It could be as insignificant as breaking something in a supermarket—crash!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): A friend can definitely surprise you today. Alternatively, you could meet somebody new who is completely surprising and bizarre. Stay open to all possibilities.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You very much have your own ideas today. Nobody will be able to convince you otherwise. Something different and unusual seems to intrigue you now. You're exploring new stuff.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Something might suddenly occur that makes you lose or break something that somebody else owns. (Not good.) On the other hand, somebody might suddenly give you something! (Very good.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Conversations with partners and close friends hold a few surprises today. Somebody might be quite feisty. Don't push the river. Gently does it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Try to be cooperative with co-workers today. This is not a good day to quit your day job. Crashes, power outages and technological glitches are likely.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Love at first sight could happen today. (Maybe it's love at second sight.) Something exciting occurs with some kind of flirtation. Parents must be vigilant about children, because it's an accident-prone day.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Avoid domestic accidents today. Little slips, goofy mistakes and breakage to dishes or minor things could occur. Similarly, family arguments might suddenly flare up. Be patient.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Today Mercury moves into your sign, where it will stay for three weeks. This gives you an urgent desire to communicate to others. (It's hard to keep your shirt on when you're getting something off your chest.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Impulse purchases are likely today. You might also find money. Be careful—you might also lose money. Little surprises related to your finances are inevitable.

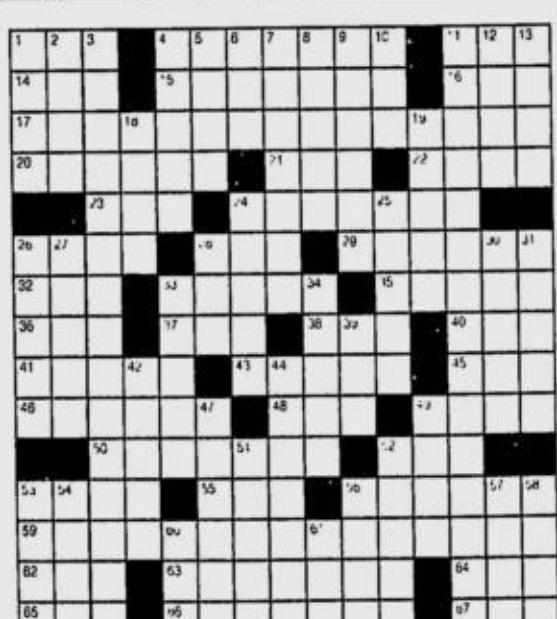
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DAILY CROSSWORD

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DOWN
1 Kathryn of "Law and Order: CI"
2 Asta's mistress
3 Three ways



By Verna Sult
Silver Spring, MD

1/3/06

Monday's Puzzle Solved

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10/26



10/26

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KIKO MACHINE



BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS



BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

CAPRICORN

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TULDOK

PATAY KANG BATA KA!
YEAR OF THE DOG
NOYON!

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

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1/3/06



LORD and Zeny Malveda with their daughter, birthday celebrator Babes Yu, and her son Rudolph



THE GANG: Josie Trinidad, Dindin Sargan, Ces Fonier and Gerty Sanchez



STANDING: Eldest son Rianne Yu with his guests, Charmaine Bondoc and Andrea Fernandez.



HEY, GOOD-LOOKING! Voughn and Dian Yu

Painless way to reclaim your youth

WITH THE WORLD'S OBSESSION TO STAY and look young, it's no wonder, *palanggas*, that almost everyone is searching for that fountain of joy that will restore the vibrancy of youth. Well, at least iron out the wrinkles, *n'est-ce pas?*

People found different methods, some causing pain and discomfort to say the least. But they did not mind, *palanggas*, as long as at the end of the line they achieved the looks they were after.

Now we have the Grefas Face Fitness center that is offering a healthier alternative, *palanggas*. Run by the vibrant Babes Yu, its president, it makes use of the fab "EST Sonic," a breakthrough skin-cleansing and micro-massage machine "used for achieving skin that is young-looking, luminous, firm and lifted, using ultrasound vibrations" without causing pain like other facials.

And, before you could bat an eyelash, the center had its launch at the super hip ballroom dancing place, the Ultra Bykes Café at Pasong Tamo in Makati.

Invitees were introduced to the Grefas system with its EST Sonic treatment, its very own Sonic Lotion and Sonic Gel that complement the salon treatment of Grefas, plus loads of other beautiful skin products, *palanggas*.

That night, birthday gal Babes Yu was living proof that the Grefas system worked extremely well. Her glowing youthful skin was enough to convince even *moi*, making her the best endorser of her own business.

Naturellement, no one could be prouder of her achievements than her *famille*, and they were all *très* visible—her husband, business taipan Rolly Yu, and their cool children, Dian, Rianne and Randolph; her parents, Lord and Zeny Malveda; close relatives; the popular rubbing alcohol makers Ernie Yu and Voughn Yu; Margaret Yu; Marose and Linda Lim, among others.

After the blowing of the birthday candles, it was time to rock and roll! They did, till most of the gals' Manolo Blahniks almost broke off—Sylvia Ching, Ditas Crisostomo, dancing lady Rose Jacob, Edward Rivera, Lyn Oliva, Nila Narciso, Corin Yabut, Ces Fonier, Juliet Genio, Zeny Alcaraz, Lurds Daffon, Daisy Chua, Agnes Lopez, Marirose Locsin, and super couples Joey and Susie Amistoso and Bobby and Elsie Trias.

Check out the Grefas Face Fitness Center at G3 Vivere Suites, Bridgeway Avenue corner



ALL IN THE FAMILLE: Popular taipan Ernie Yu with close pal Becky Garcia, Babes and Rolly Yu, and Fe Yu



BLOWING out another beautiful year is the celebrator, with sons Rianne and baby Randolph.



BACK: Pals Fe Dixon, Geena Zablan, Mary Grace Katigbak and Nini Pinlac. Seated: Kathy Park, Becky Garcia, the celebrator, and her favorite couturier, Frederick Peralta



GANG of three: Eva Abesamis, Jojo Zabarte and Georgie Diaz. Standing: Ethel Timbol, HSBC's Warner Manning and Millet Mananquil



FLAMENCO enthusiast Astrud Crisologo KUOK'S Tom Zita

head honcho, dashing Tom Zita, and Raintree's Anabelle Wisniewski, plus so many others like them; the head-turning trio composed of Metro Society hot men Philip Cu-Unjieng and Raul Manzano, and flamenco enthusiasts, sultry beauty Astrud Crisologo who, like us, applauded endlessly the hot flamenco dance by *el muy guapo*, Madrid-based Isaac de los Reyes, and the breathless, energetic performance by the students of Escuela Brasiliere Capoeira Philippines, led by dark and handsome Fantasma Coquero, dahlings.

HSBC's new promo is called 77 Destinations. It gives anyone who joins—take note, *palanggas*—a chance to win round-trip tickets for two, hotel accommodations, plus US\$2,000 pocket money, to any country where there is an HSBC. Now, that's really awesome.

Check out this fantastic promo by texting HSBC to 2600, or log on to www.hsbc.com.ph.

Who knows, *palanggas*? You just might be the next jetsetter, *nes't-ce pas*, as in *di bala*?



MEN of substance: Brilliant marketing man Basil Ong and Kurt Aydin



HAIL, hail, the gang's all here: Moi, Celine Lopez, Pepper Teehankee, Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Raul Manzano and HSBC's Laine Santana

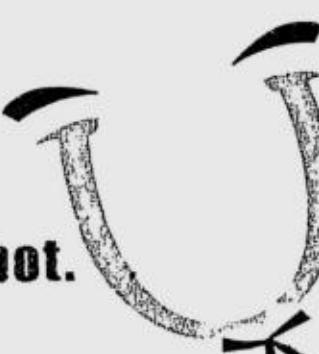


PIERRE Calasanz, HSBC's Martin Cook and Lyn Palma



SILK Cocoon's Frances Lim and Metro Society's Lia Bernardo

Happy ang tumatalon, maraming naabot.



Anong meron ang taong happy?

<a> Energy

** Stress**

Text the letter of your answer to 2910 for a chance to win special prizes.

Coincidence or jinx?

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A jinxed office?

This question arose when National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) director Reynaldo Wycoco died recently following a stroke.

INQUIRER reporter Margaux C. Ortiz said in an article (Dec. 21, 2005) that "almost in succession, NBI directors Antonio Aragon, Santiago Toledo, Federico Opinion Jr. and, now, Reynaldo Wycoco, died while in office."

Aragon, a diabetic, died after complaining of chest pains. Toledo had an enlarged heart and acute pulmonary edema and died of a heart attack. Opinion, also a diabetic, died of kidney failure.

NBI officials consider the deaths purely coincidental. "There's no jinx," they said.

But what is a jinx? An Oxford dictionary defines jinx as "a person or object that is believed to cause bad luck."

What makes a place unlucky? The most common belief is, if somebody dies in a place, especially if violently, then it causes bad luck. Some streets are considered to be "accident prone."

According to some beliefs, if a person has a violent death in a house, office or street, his/her soul tries to capture others or lure them to the same fate for revenge.

The almost consecutive deaths of four NBI directors while in office are considered mere coincidences because there's no logical connection among them. Besides, it was reported that all four officials consulted *feng shui* experts to ensure that the flow of energy in the office was good and would bring good luck.

But *feng shui*, as far as I know, does not consider geopathic stress or negative rays coming from under the earth where a house or office is located. If a person happens to

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco



hold office or sleep on top of a geopathic stress point, that person is likely to get sick, be accident-prone or emotionally unstable. Some suffer the ultimate fate of death.

Geopathic stress has been studied scientifically and proven to cause negative effects, not only on human beings, but also on plants and animals. Perhaps that is what is causing all those deaths at the NBI and not because the place is jinxed.

I remember that when I worked in a large shoe-manufacturing company north of Manila, I replaced a human resource official who did not last long in his job. I, too, resigned after only two years on the job.

My assistant, a competent woman lawyer, refused to occupy the same room believing it to be unlucky, especially the chair we used. She preferred to stay outside the room using her old chair.

Do such beliefs have a basis in fact? If the place or office happens to be located in a geographically stressed area, or if there are negative spirits haunting it, then yes, it can invite bad luck. Otherwise, it should not bother anyone.

Texts from the grave

Reader Joe Bayani wrote to ask what to do about a dead girlfriend who was sending him text messages from beyond the grave. Here's Joe's intriguing letter:

"Two weeks ago, Carmina, who became

my girlfriend (through text messaging), died. After her death, she started sending me text messages.

"During her wake, she continued to text me, telling me how much she loved me. In one of our 'conversations,' she told me she was not dead. After her burial, I thought she would stop (sending text messages). I was wrong. She would usually send me text messages at around 11 in the evening or at midnight.

"Her cousin is now using her SIM (subscriber's information module) card per Carmina's request. I asked her cousin to turn off the phone but Carmina was still able to get through to me. It's funny that she found herself in different places, like her home or a resort.

"I want to ask: Should I continue 'talking' to her? Please enlighten me on this strange event. Thank you."

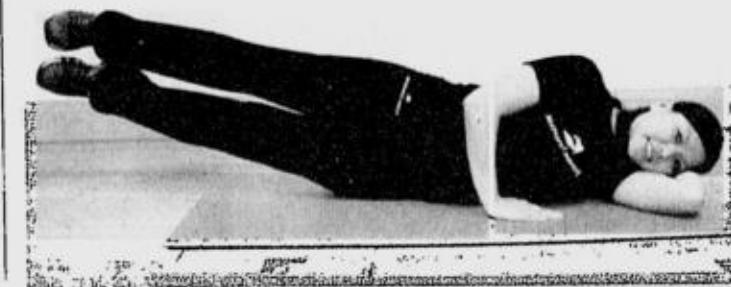
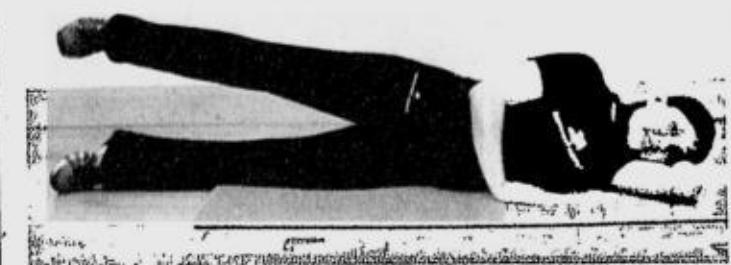
It is quite clear that your friend Carmina's spirit is earthbound. She's either not aware she's dead, or she refuses to acknowledge that fact. Earthbound spirits have unfinished business on earth. Their consciousness is focused on the people left behind.

It would be best for you to answer the text messages of Carmina, telling her you love her, too, but she's now on the other side and must accept her fate. There are relatives and loved ones waiting for her in the spirit world to help her in the transition. She should rest in peace and leave the past behind her. She should seek and go to the light. Her relatives are waiting for her there.

For information on regular mind power, intuition development, and soulmates seminars I conduct, please call 8107245 or 8926806.

— EXERCISE OF THE WEEK —

Pilates side leg lift series 1



THIS PILATES EXERCISE strengthens the obliques (muscles that crisscross the waist), as well as the hips and inner thigh muscles.

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your side with your legs together in line with your hips and shoulders.

2. Rest your head on your bent bottom arm and place your top hand in front of your chest on the mat with your palm flat and your fingertips facing your head.

3. Lift the top leg and hold it steady. Then, lift the bottom leg.

4. Slowly lower both legs back to the mat.

Performance tips:

1. Always contract your abdominal muscles first before you lift your legs to protect your lower back.

2. Breathing: Inhale as you lift the top leg followed by the

bottom leg. Exhale as you lower both to the mat.

3. Foot position: Point your feet as you lift top and bottom leg. Flex your feet as you lower the legs down.

4. Avoid jerking. Move slowly with control as you lift and lower legs.

5. Keep your shoulder and hip from rolling forward or backwards as you lift your legs by contracting your abdominal muscles and visualizing a glass of water on your shoulder and hip.

6. Always lengthen and elongate your legs as you lift.

7. Try to bring your ankles together when you lift the bottom leg to join the top leg. This makes you strongly contract your inner thigh muscles.

8.

This is an advanced exercise. Do not attempt this if you have a history of lower back problems. Ask your doctor first.

Repetitions: Do 5-10 repetitions on each side.

Fitness trends for 2006

From page C1

I hope local restaurants follow this trend (a few have already hopped on the bandwagon) because the nutritional information will greatly help people make healthier food choices.

Fusion classes

So many exercise programs are available but time for doing them all is limited so fusion classes blending several workout styles in one session are becoming quite popular. It is common to see a workout that combines ballet leg exercises with upper body weight training.

ACE notes that fusion classes also combine traditional elements of a fitness regimen with many key features of mind-body activities like proper posture, breathing, and body awareness.

Functional fitness

Fitness is meant to make us function better in real life. "Functional fitness training" means exercises using multiple muscle groups to challenge coordination, balance, strength and endurance instead of just focusing on one muscle at a time like in traditional weight training.

For more information on ACE certifying exams, call the Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines at 9202762 or 0917-5181202.

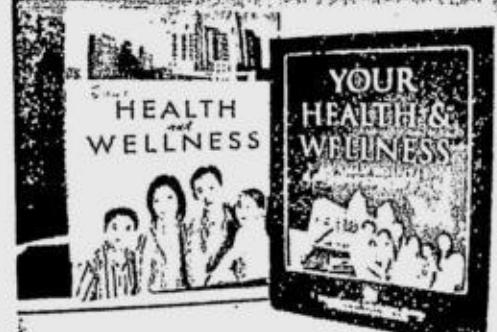
Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

Book gives healthy living tips

THE "HEALTH AND WELLNESS: AN ASIAN Hospital and Medical Center Guide" is now in bookstores. The coffee-table book, which lists the full medical services and features of Asian Hospital, provides practical medical tips and quick information on healthy living.

The 134-page hard-bound guidebook offers relevant and accurate health information reviewed by medical experts. It contains information on certain diseases and their treatment.

"The Health and Wellness: An Asian Hospital and Medical Center Guide" is now available at National Bookstore and PowerBooks outlets.



Pain-free morning after

A HANGOVER DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THE inevitable consequence of a huge celebration like New Year with all the drinking involved.

With Chaser caplet, the morning after need not be one of misery.

Chaser caplets are all-natural, clinically proven hangover solutions designed to prevent hangovers. Two Chaser caplets before your first drink will let you wake up refreshed the next day with no nausea, no fatigue, no headaches.

A recent survey shows that just 3.2 drinks will already cause some type of illness in most people, and about 10 percent of drinkers feel bad just after one or two drinks.

Chaser absorbs the harmful elements in beer, wine and spirits that cause hangover. It consists of activated calcium carbonate and vegetable carbon that act like a sponge to soak up those substances.

The harmful elements, called congeners, account for the flavor, aroma and color of alcoholic beverages. Headaches occur because the immune system releases chemicals to rid the body of these substances.



Chaser was given by the United States Food and Drug Administration the GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) rating. Clinical trials showed it could help prevent 17 common hangover symptoms including headache, nausea and fatigue.

Chaser is available at all GNC outlets and select Mercury Drug stores.

Holiday treats can lead to excess weight

THOSE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR treats were probably irresistible but you might need expert help to shed those extra pounds you gained.

As a popular saying goes, "sweet moment on the lips, forever on the hips." Experts warn that obesity is beginning to be a problem among young and old alike. But partying need not result in several excess pounds afterwards.

It takes a great amount of control and discipline not to indulge in holiday goodies, but the reward is good health and a fit body.

A study of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute revealed that in 1987, there was already a 12-percent prevalence of overweight Filipinos with two percent of them obese.

The percentage rose to 13.5 in 1993, with three percent obese. Five years later, the figure was up to 16.5 percent, the obese accounted for four percent.

Two years ago, almost a fourth of the

Filipino population, 24 percent were overweight and 5 percent were obese.

Nenita Umali, weight-management dietitian and section manager of St. Luke's Weight Management Center, said the problem was caused by the change in the Filipinos' eating habits and diet, with an increase fondness for junk food like people in affluent western countries.

Umali said additional inches and pounds put people at risk for certain types of diseases.

Unnecessary pounds not only undermined one's self esteem but also posed numerous health risks. An overweight or obese individual was more at risk of gout and some types of cancer. Sleep apnea, a serious condition where breathing slowed down during sleep, was often worsened by excessive weight.

Childhood obesity, which often led to adult obesity, was also on the rise. Experts said about 1/3-2/3 of obese children became obese adults.

The two-year-old Weight Management Center is a "one-stop shop" in weight management. It is the only hospital-based center of its kind complete with multidisciplinary team composed of physician specialists, dietitians, behavioral psychologist/psychiatrist and nurses.

It has its own gym where patients can exercise under the supervision of physical therapists.

At the center, the patient, together with weight-management consultants, set realistic weight loss goals. Factors considered when setting a goal include metabolism, psychological profile and age. It is easier for young people to lose weight than older individuals. Men more easily shed unwanted fats than women, especially menopausal ones whose metabolism has slowed considerably.

Umali said losing weight was a combination of exercise and dieting, with moderation as the key.

Call 7230101 local 5209.

Calendar sale benefits disabled

WATSONS 2006 DESK calendars are now available at all Watsons outlets nationwide for only P25 each.



WATSONS' 2006 desk calendars feature artworks by 12 artists of Tahanang Walang Hagdanan.

Andrew Denby, Watsons general manager, says the corporate social responsibility endeavor is in line with Watsons' commitment to add quality to life.

Money raised will be used by TWH for the education, skills training, rehabilitation and employment of PWD.

Watsons offers more than 25,000 products ranging from medicines, cosmetics and toiletries to fashion items, confectionery, cards and toys. It is the largest health and beauty retailer in Asia, currently operating over 980 stores in nine markets.

HEALTHY 2006

Fruit Magic, the country's innovative fruit beverage company, offers Soy Magic for people looking for a healthier drink this 2006. The beverage is an alternative to dairy milk and fresh fruit nectars, juices and shakes. It has health-giving nutrients without the calories, sweeteners and preservatives. Other products from Fruit Magic are Fruzel smoothies, Pure Nectars and shakes. Call 3646927 or 3643621; fax 3662934 or visit www.fruitmagic.com.ph.

